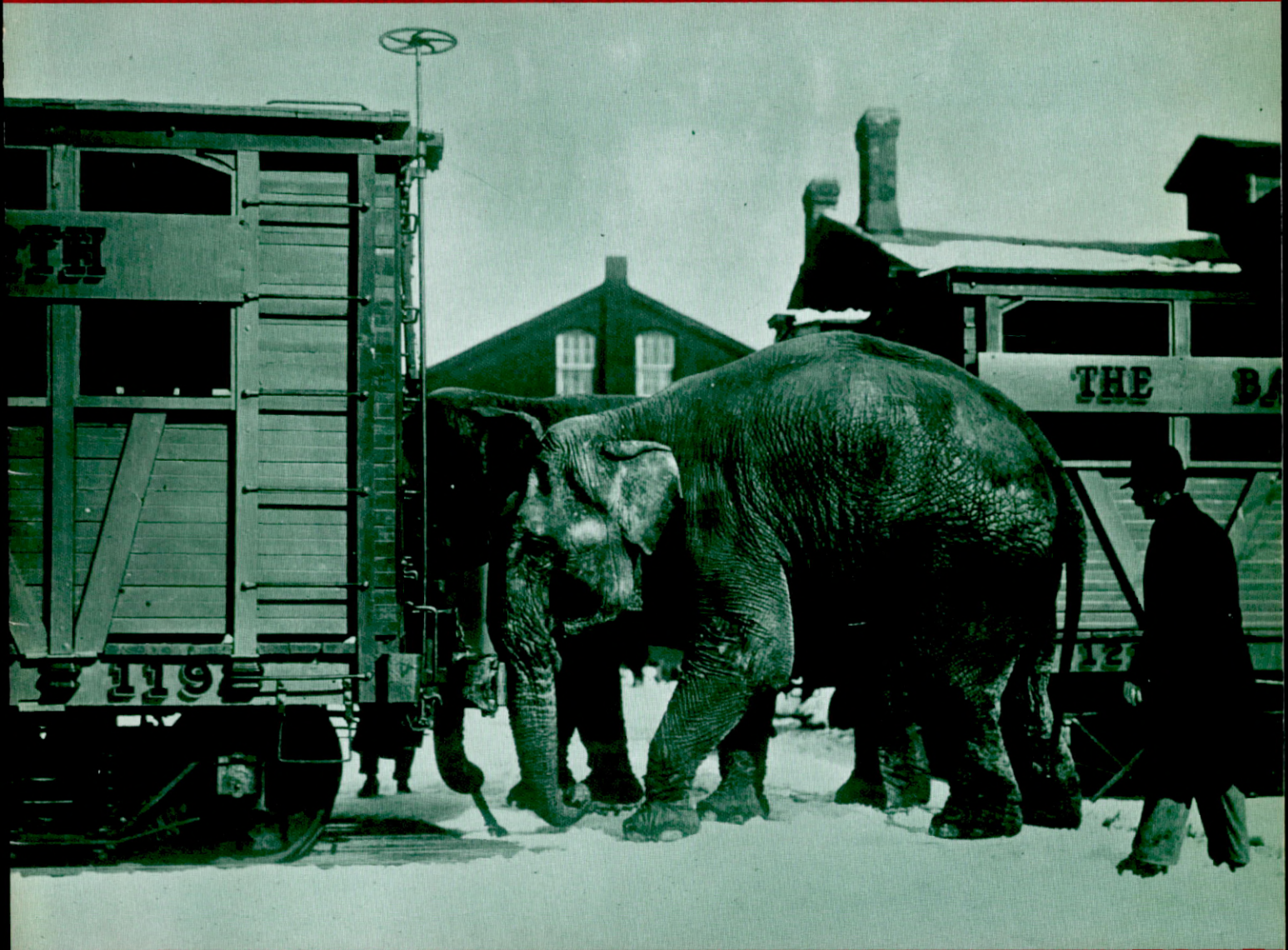


Bandwagon



THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1978



Season's Greetings

from the Staff
of

CIRCUS WORLD

MUSEUM

BARABOO, WISCONSIN

JUGGLERS-CLOWNS-ACTRESS-ENTERTAINMENT-SHOWS



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AERIALISTS-TRAINING ANIMALS-ACROBATS



THE FAMOUS ZACCHINIS

Part Two of the Human Cannonball Story

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

Research was begun on this project in 1975, with a flood of information being revealed. So much information and history that it was necessary to divide the history of human projectiles into two parts. Because the Zacchini Family dominate cannon history their story was held for a second installment devoted only to them.

Part one covering all other cannon acts appeared in the November-December 1976 *Bandwagon*.

As noted in the first installment cannon acts appeared in America and Great Britain in the early 1870s. The novelty of a human being shot through space had run its course by the late 1890s. For a period of 20 odd years no record is found of an act of this type being presented by a circus, on either side of the Atlantic. Extensive correspondence with circus historians in Europe has failed to provide evidence of any modern cannon act prior to the revival by the Zacchinis in 1922.

Patriarch of the Zacchinis was Ildebrando, born in Italy in 1869. He studied to be a painter, but after his marriage to Nina DaPaos, he became a circus performer and later owner of the Olympic Circus. The couple had seven sons, Edmondo, Hugo, Bruno, Vittorio, Emanuel, Mario and Teobaldo, and two daughters, Yolanda and Olga.

Ildebrando Zacchini's circus was built from a number of acts he fashioned using his family, training the sons and daughters at an early age. The

eldest son Edmondo performed as "Pagnotta" the clown. In classic European tradition, he was a talking clown using his skills as a xylophonist and puppeteer.

The elder Zacchini had seen Zazel, or other cannon acts before the turn of the century, and he felt it was time to revive the act. At first it was planned to shoot a person from a cannon to a trapeze, as was done by Zazel. However to make the act truly spectacular they would have to make a much longer jump than the two dozen or so feet performed previously. This

A very rare photo shows Zacchini cannon #1 in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1924. The Family's Olympic Circus had suffered a blowdown. The cannon is sitting on the Pakar truck. Edmondo Zacchini Collection.



This 1937 photo shows Hugo and Mario in the air after being shot from the #6 double cannon on Ringling-Barnum.

created problems, as they found it was not possible to hold on to a trapeze bar when traveling at the necessary speed. So the human cannonball would have to land in a net. (Zazel had dropped to a net after catching the trapeze.) The family generally credits "Papa" Ildebrando with development of the 1922 prototype, from which subsequent cannons were built. Edmondo had graduated in 1920 from the Turin Technical Institute with a degree in mechanical engineering. The next eldest brothers Hugo and Bruno encouraged the design and building of the first Zacchini cannon.

The English Machine Company, an engineering firm on the Isle of Malta

was selected in 1922 to construct the number one Zacchini cannon. This was a spring loaded apparatus mounted on a pedestal.

After completion the unit was shipped to Alexandria, Egypt, where the Olympic Circus was completing a stand. The next stand for the show was Cairo, and it was here that father and sons began working and experimenting with what they expected to be a great attraction for their circus. A sack of sand the weight of a man was used first in order to adjust the tension. Second son Hugo was selected as the first bullet. Hugo made a short jump, but the cannon broke. Adjustments were made and the cannon act was used in the show on occasion. The unit was placed on a flat bed Pakar truck for moving, but two more cannons would be built before the cannon became a part of the truck.

From Egypt the show went to Lebanon, Syria and Palestine a tours. The Olympic Circus returned to Egypt in 1925 and by now improvements had been made and cannon #1 was being used regularly. But there were other problems for the show, as it was caught in the Arab-English turmoil. The political crossfire left them with no permits to erect their tent.

The Zacchinis were bankrupt. They sold their equipment and 14 of their 22 Arabian horses and set sail for Spain. Upon arrival in Barcelona the customs officials set a high duty for the cannon and they were forced to abandon it.

During the winter of 1926 cannon #2 was built in Barcelona, Spain. This was also spring-action, but greatly improved. It was also mounted on a pedestal. Having left all of the show but a few horses, the Zacchinis booked their many acts on a Spanish show. This had provided the funds to construct the second cannon. But they could not book the cannon act. In desperation they hired additional performers and produced their own circus again in a bull ring in Tortosa, Spain. The cannon act found its traditional place as the closing act, and it was a sensation. Their Olympic Circus was a great success and their finances improved. It was clear that the cannon was their key to the future.

It was in Spain that their cannon was observed by Paul Leinert, a German performer, also in the show. At this point the Zacchinis were not sensitive to the value of the design of the interworkings of their cannon, and were not as protective as they were to become later. Leinert saw enough to go back to Germany and construct his own cannon, and later two more.

There has been some suggestion that Leinert had constructed and presented a cannon act in Germany in the early 1920s, however Germany circus historians today are unable to supply evidence of the Leinert act prior to



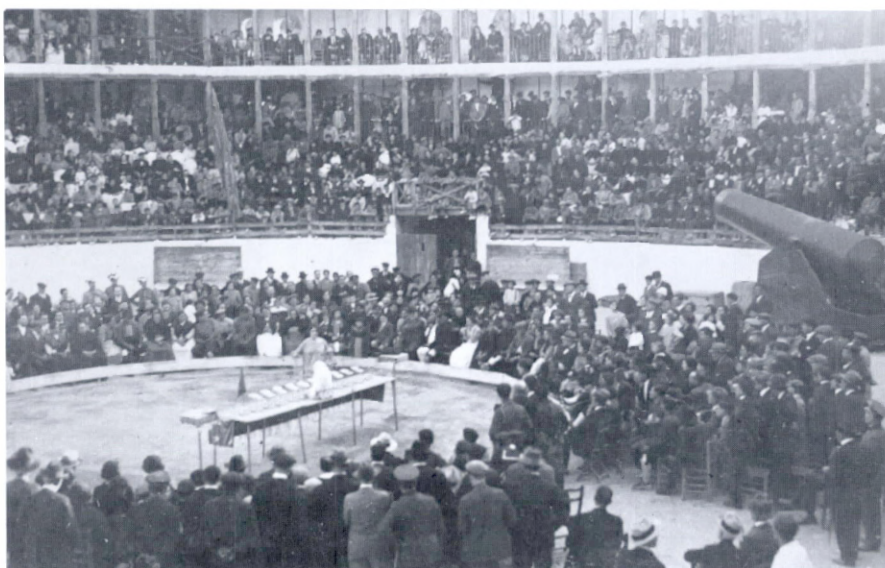
The famous cannonballing Zacchinis, left to right. Edmondo, Hugo, Bruno, Vittorio and Mario. Missing is brother Emanuel. Bruno Zacchini Collection.

1926. Leinert was the first to mount a cannon on wheels, using a design like a howitzer.

With their bankroll restored the Family went to Turin, Italy. Six months later a new cannon #3 was built. A 3 ton Chassis SPA (Societa Piemontese Automobili) was purchased and this cannon was the first to be mounted on a truck, and the first to use compressed air. The year was 1927.

This cannon was an even bigger

Cannon #2 is shown in Tortosa, Spain, in 1926. The barrel is mounted on a base that appears to have rollers on it for moving. This was the last cannon to be spring powered. Edmondo Zacchini Collection.



success and it appeared throughout Italy. Hugo, the bullet, was decorated by the Prince of Italy. The new compressed air cannon propelled Hugo to a height of 50 feet and a distance of 100 feet. With Bruno as his trigger man Hugo played Berlin, Moscow, Leningrad and Copenhagen.

Meanwhile Edmondo continued with cannon #2 using Vittorio as the bullet. The Family was back together in Paris in 1928 where they constructed cannon #4, this one was built on a Saurer truck chassis. Hugo and Bruno used the new cannon and Edmondo and Vittorio toured with the #3 SPA unit.

John Ringling had seen Hugo's act at the Tivoli Garden in Copenhagen, and he signed the act for the 1929 season on Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows. The new Paris made cannon was built to go to the United States. It was at this point that Edmondo junked the old #2 cannon and con-

tinued with Vittorio using the #3 SPA.

Edmondo was making big money at Luna Park in Paris. It was here that George Hamid, Sr. caught the act for the first time in 1929. Hamid had been impressed with the success of the other cannon acts that were in the United States in 1929, Hugo Zacchini on Ringling Barnum, Cliff Aeros on Sells-Floto and Wilno who was being booked on Fairs by his own Wirth-Hamid Agency.

Edmondo and Vittorio were booked by Hamid and arrived in America in May 1930. The #3 SPA had hard rubber tires when it arrived in the United States, but these were soon replaced by pneumatic tires.

The Wirth Hamid agency booked Edmondo and Vittorio on fairs and park dates during the 1930 season. In 1930 Edmondo constructed another cannon. Cannon #5 was built on a Stewart truck, probably using the barrel and firing unit from the SPA. The initial design of cannon #5 had a rectangular windshield. This was later modified in 1933 with a semicircle cut into the windshield so the barrel could be lowered a bit for better clearance.

By 1933 Edmondo had begun his long association as a free act on carnivals, first appearing with the Johnny J. Jones Exposition, in 1934 he and his bullet Vittorio were with the Rubin & Cherry show, in 1935 on World of Mirth, in 1936-37-38 Dodson's World's Fair Shows, 1939-40 Cetlin & Wilson, 1941 Goodman Wonder Shows, and in 1942 Prell's Shows. Other members of the Zacchini family were to appear with other carnivals, as were other cannon acts like Wilno and Harry Pollak. But using Edmondo's #5 cannon Vittorio was the first man to be shot over a ferris wheel.

The Edmondo/Vittorio act played a few indoor circus dates including the Hagenbeck-Wallace Forepaugh-Sells Circus date in Chicago, Illinois, in 1935. The "Human Rocket" had been booked and advertised, but he was injured in Buffalo a few weeks before and was out of commission, causing a quick call to Edmondo. This act started a long series of dates with the Olympic Circus in the Chicago Stadium in 1939.

The Zacchinis had settled in Tampa, Florida, in the early 1930s. They built large Spanish style homes along Fountain Boulevard, and a shop was constructed at the rear of Edmondo's home around 1933 in order to provide space to build cannon #6. The number six unit will be covered later as Hugo Zacchini's story is detailed. Cannon #7 was built by Vittorio and Emanuel in 1939, this will also be covered later.

In 1940 Edmondo constructed a new cannon using a Diamond T truck, this was #8. This unit was built in the shop in Tampa. The new streamlined #8 cannon first appeared on the Cetlin & Wilson shows in 1940. Vittorio con-



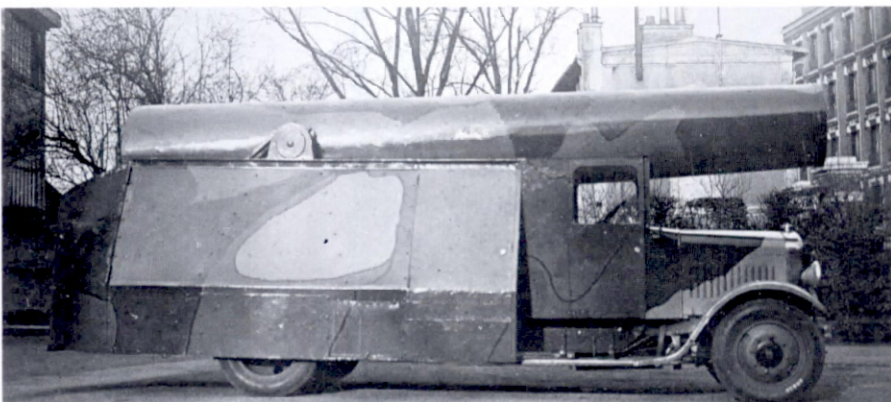
Cannon #3 was built in Italy, in 1927, it is on a SPA truck. It was used by Edmondo, to shoot Vittorio, until 1931. Edmondo Zacchini Collection.

tinued as the bullet through the 1942 season.

Edmondo has five children, Egle Victoria, Duina, Eddie (Egizio), Hugo and Rene. Following December 7, 1941, Edmondo saw what was coming and knew there would be a shortage of male bullets. He started training 19 year old Egle, at their winter home in Tampa, she was first shot 50 feet, then 60, and on until she reached 150 feet. Egle wore a heavy horsehide leather jump suit, goggles and a helmet.

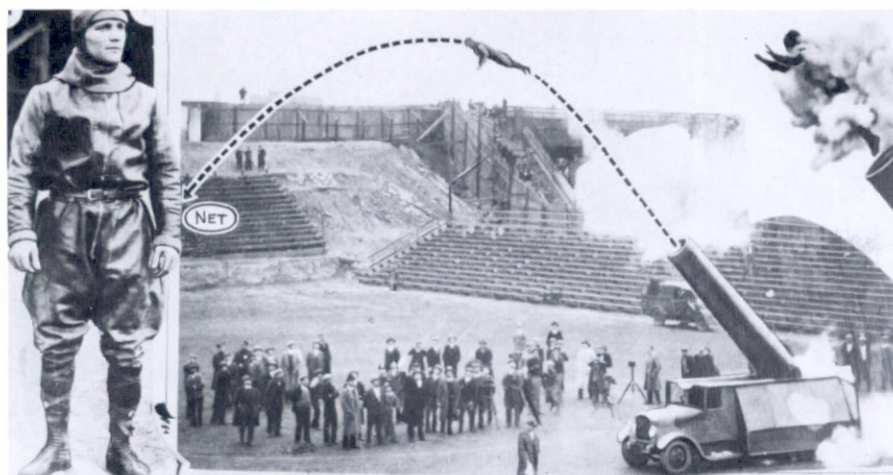
Her sister Duina was also being trained as a bullet. Edmondo left Tampa in late February of 1943, for the Minneapolis Shrine date March 8 to 13, taking daughter Egle and son Eddie. Egle was 21 years old and Eddie was 19.

This is cannon #4, built specially in 1928 to come to the United States, is shown fresh out of the shop in Paris, France. Edmondo Zacchini Collection.



Eddie was on hand to fill in should there be any problems, however he remained only a short time before going into the Army. Duina, the youngest daughter remained in Tampa completing a high school term until April and then joined the act in Chicago for the Olympic date. The two girls then alternated, appearing as Miss Victory, the first women human projectiles. Egle, Duina and Eddie had performed together as the Flying Zacchinis, a trapeze act prior to that time, the flying act appeared in Chicago in 1943 also. Later during the summer of 1943 the Miss Victory cannon act appeared with the Larry Sunbrock Big Top Circus in New York City. The act continued being featured at the Chicago and Detroit Branes Bros. Olympic dates in 1944, 1945 and 1946.

The 1946 Olympic Chicago date closed on May 12, and the show moved to the companion date in Detroit, Michigan. On May 14 Edmondo was driving the cannon toward Detroit when he was truck by a gasoline filled truck at the East Chicago-Gary boun-



dary line. Neither Egle or Edmondo were injured, however the truck was destroyed. In his haste to leave the blazing truck Edmondo forgot about \$10,000 he had wrapped in newspaper, the season's savings went up in smoke.

The barrel and firing unit were salvaged from the wreck and returned to the Tampa shops. Edmondo at once went to work remounting the barrel on a new Diamond T truck, making this cannon #9. This cannon truck was 25'6", in length, the barrel was 23'4" overall, with a 19" bore opening. This 1946 #9 cannon truck is perhaps the most familiar to present day circus fans, as it is still being used by Edmondo's middle son Hugo. The cannon was used until 1948, and then remained retired through 1954. Hugo performed for his Father reviving #9 in 1955 for a date in Havana, Cuba. In 1947 Edmondo built a new double cannon called the "Double XX", this was cannon #11. Bruno had built a double also in 1947 that was #10. The #11 double and the single #9 appeared at the Havana engagement. The single being brought

After arriving in the United States a special shot was made for the press in New York City in 1929. This montage, using photos taken on March 26, 1929, appeared in the 1929 Ringling-Barnum courier. Circus World Museum Collection.

out of retirement to supply two cannons for the Cuba date.

The #11 double cannon appeared with the Ringling-Barnum Circus from 1958 until 1963, with Egle and Duina as the bullets initially, then with Duina and Walter Patterson, and finally with Walter and Ruth Paterson. Ruth Patterson and Duina appeared at the Madison Square Garden date with Ringling-Barnum in 1958. Duina continued the Garden dates through the 1960 season. In 1950 Duina married Jack Norman, Jr., an attorney in Nashville, Tenn. Egle married Carl

Edmondo Zacchini brought his brand new cannon #5 to the A. G. Barnes Circus lot for a visit in 1930. Edmondo Zacchini Collection.

Sedlmayr, Jr., in 1951. Sedlmayr is well known as the present owner of the Royal American Shows, the largest carnival in the world. Egle continued performing for her Father until 1955.

Edmondo and the #11 double appeared for the 1965 season at the New York World's Fair. In 1968 Edmondo's double was paired with Emanuel's #12 at the thrill circus produced by Art Concello at Shea Stadium in New York. This is probably the only time two double cannons have shot four people at the same time.

The only member of the Edmondo Zacchini family to continue as a bullet was son Hugo. He has been on his own using the #8 Diamond T cannon since 1958. Hugo received much publicity in recent years by way of the law suit he filled against Scripps-Howard Broadcasting Co. and its Cleveland, Ohio, affiliate, WEWS-TV. Zacchini contended his rights to control publicity surrounding his performance outweighed First Amendment privileges claimed by WEWS, which broadcast a film clip of Zacchini's entire performance at the Geauga County Fair in 1972. The case was taken to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1977. The court reversed the Cuyahoga County Court.

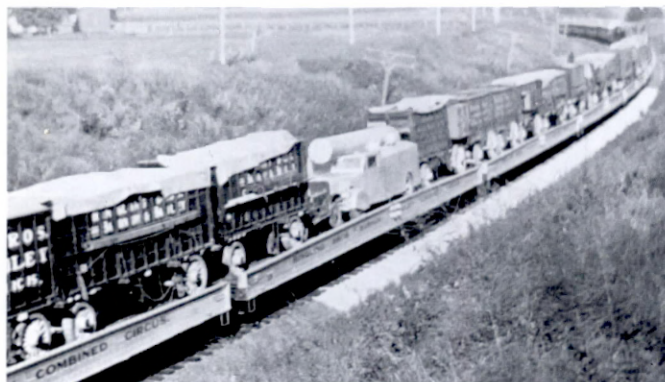
Hugo with #8 cannon and Edmondo with #11 (used as a single) appeared together at the Ringling Barnum Thrill Circus at the Ohio State Fair in 1977. Hugo holds two engineering degrees from the University of Florida, and is the only Zacchini still going out of a cannon.

Over the years Edmondo has enlisted a number of non-family members as bullets. Walter and Ruth Patterson worked off and on until 1971. Nancy and George Rucavano were used in 1964 and 1965. Roy Bickle worked in 1966. Carol and Wayne Wright through 1973, when they appeared at the Old Milwaukee Days. Paul Creason was used in 1974 and Ron Houston has been Edmondo's bullet from 1975 to date. Houston has taken the #11 cannon to South America and Japan.

Edmondo tried his hand at operating a circus when the Zacchini Circus opened on June 19, 1950, in a ball park in Columbia, S.C. Son Eddie has been producing indoor and ballpark shows for a number of years, using the old family OLYMPIC Circus title. The last two years he has produced the KOOL-AID Circus at various fairs.

Edmondo Zacchini is now 83 years of age and does not make too many trips away from his large home in Tampa. During a visit to Tampa a year or so ago he proudly gave the author a tour of his shop and a viewing of cannons #7, #8, and #11. All but #7 are in operating order, and that one could be ready in a few weeks if needed. All of his children have worked with the cannon act except the youngest Rene,





The second cannon to be built in America was #6. It is pictured here on the Ringling-Barnum train as it pulls into Baraboo, Wisconsin, in 1933.

who is now a judge in Hillsborough County. Edmondo is proud of Rene, after receiving his law degree Papa said no to any cannon involvement.

Hugo Zacchini, second oldest of the brothers, was born in Santa Ana, Peru, on October 20, 1898. He is perhaps the best known "bullet" having gone out of the cannon from the initial shot in 1922 until he retired in 1956, at the age of 58 years.

Hugo and brother Bruno came to the United States in 1929 to begin an eight year engagement with the Greatest Show on Earth. They brought the newly built #4 and used it through the 1932 season. The complete cannon and truck were retired after that season, however the barrel and firing unit were to be revived in 1939 as cannon #7.

In 1933 the shop was built behind the Family homes on Fountain Blvd., in Tampa. Hugo and Edmondo built homes side by side. Their Father Ildebrando had come to Tampa to join

The original double now rests in Fontana, Ca. It is owned by Hugo Zacchini, Jr. Don Danner photo, from Doc Miller collection.

the Family from Barcelona in 1932.

During the winter of 1933 Hugo, Bruno and Edmondo worked together in the design of a new cannon, #6. The #6 cannon was built on an aluminum WHITE truck, the original engine block was also aluminum. The barrel was made by Alco. The overall length bumper to bumper was 24'3". The barrel was 21 feet long, 3 feet in diameter.

There has been some question as to the year this cannon was built, it appears in 1933 Ringling-Barnum photos, but the double act was not performed until 1934. We can only conclude that it was either first built as a single, or as a double but used as a single in 1933. Bruno was the trigger man for Hugo during the entire stay with the Ringling-Barnum show.

annon #6, (or #6A) presented the first double shot in cannon history on March 30, 1934 in Madison Square Garden. The two bullets were Hugo and Vittorio. Edmondo and Bruno were the trigger men. After the New York engagement Vittorio and Edmondo returned to their cannon. Mario replaced Vittorio as the second bullet and remained with the act through 1940.

A contract in the files of the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin, covers the Zacchini Family and their agreement with Ringling-Barnum for



The #6 double cannon is shown in the backyard of the Ringling-Barnum show around 1935. This cannon was in active use from 1933 to 1968, longer than any other unit.

the 1936 season. The lump sum salary for all was \$635.00 per week. They were to present the double cannon act, the Three Del Paos, a roping, riding and whipcracking number in the wild west aftershow. Elsa (Mrs. Hugo) and Gertrude were to appear in the tournament and swinging ladder number. The agreement stated that the group was also engaged for the 1937 season. The 1936 route book for the Ringling-Barnum show lists the following Zacchini Family members: Hugo, Bruno, Mario, Emanuel, Elsa, Trudy, and Katie.

During the 1938 season Hugo took the double to Atlantic City's Steel Pier. By then Emanuel had become an alternate bullet, with Bruno remaining as the trigger man.

In 1939 Bruno and Hugo organized and operated the Zacchini Bros. Shows, a motorized carnival. The #6 double appeared as a free attraction

Hugo and Mario on the Ringling-Barnum show in 1937, just prior to being shot out of the first double cannon. Don Smith Photo.

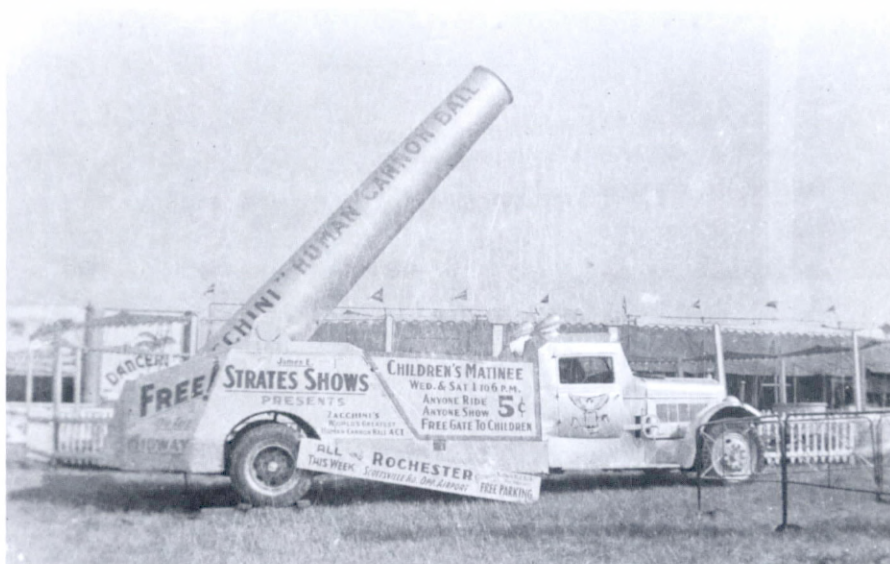




Egle Victoria Zacchini, Edmondo's daughter, was the first woman to use a Zacchini cannon.

using Mario and Emanuel as bullets going over two ferris wheels. The double remained with the Zacchini carnival in 1940. It was during the 1940 season that Mario had a bad experience during a shot, and declined to continue as a bullet. During the 1941, 1942 and 1943 seasons the double was used as a free attraction on the Zacchini carnival with Bruno replacing Mario as the bullet with Hugo. Elsa (Mrs. Hugo) and Germana (Mrs. Bruno) served as trigger ladies during this period. In 1944 Hugo took back the cannon and it remained with him. From 1944 on Hugo presented the act as a single shot, leaving one half idle. For a period of six years Hugo booked various independent dates. For the 1950 season he signed with Ben Davenport and appeared as a feature of the

Emanuel Zacchini remodeled #7 in the early 1950s. It is shown here on Cristiani Bros. Circus in Chicago, in 1958. C. P. Fox Photo.



Dailey Bros. Circus. In 1951 he was with King Bros. Circus and in 1952-53 he was with King-Cristiani. In 1955 Hugo made the trip to Alaska with the Bailey Bros. Cristiani Circus. Emanuel Zacchini had cannon #7 on Bailey-Cristiani in 1954 and all of the 1955 season except for the Alaska date.

In 1955 Hugo joined the Clyde Beatty Circus and remained on that show through the 1959 season. Hugo retired as a bullet in 1958 and his son Hugo Jr. (Butch) filled in from then on as bullet. By 1961 a nose cone and fins had been added to the barrel along with flashing lights. The cannon made the South American tour with the Ringling show. In 1965 the cannon was a free act on the Carson & Barnes show and in 1966 was on the Gatti-Charles Circus, it was last used in 1968.

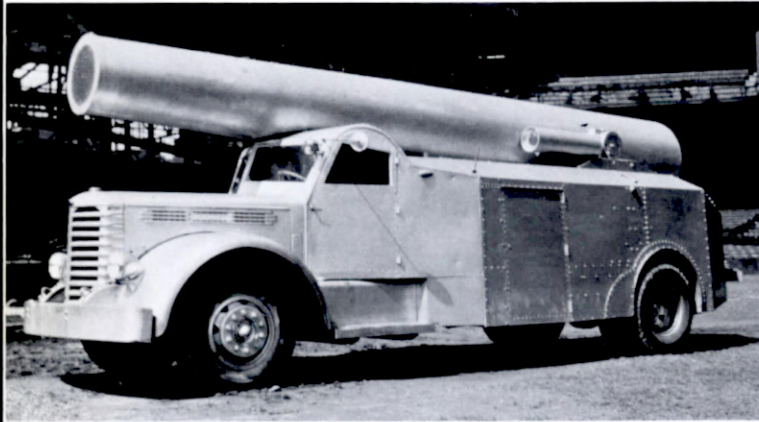
Hugo Zacchini moved to Fontana, California in 1966. He was interviewed in 1974 by Don Oswald and Marv Kreiger. The cannon was parked at the Zacchini home in Fontana and had not been used for a number of years. Don Oswald wrote a description of the cannon which appeared in the *Little Circus Wagon*, April-May 1975.

Cannon #7 built in 1939 first appeared on the Strates carnival. It was from this cannon that Emanuel made the longest jump over three ferris wheels. Al Conover Collection.

Oswald gave these details of the #6 cannon. The cannon now is painted silver, except for the barrel which is white. The crest of the upper fin is green, white and red. Both sides of the truck are hinged to lift up to provide a porch-like arrangement. Under the portion that lifts are the original sides. The back left corner of the truck contains two doors. The upper opens to a two burner Coleman stove and the lower to a dish storage area. Opposite the main control panel behind the cab is another panel leading into a bedroom on wheels. Beneath the barrel is a double bed and two small dressers. The engine has been replaced a number of times and a new bumper and

The 1939 International truck cannon was further remodeled as the ZX-21, by Eddie Zacchini. It is shown here in the Edmondo Zacchini garage in Tampa, where it is today.





Edmondo Zacchini built this cannon #8 in 1940. It was lost in a wreck in 1946.

fenders with twin headlights have replaced the original single lights. Otherwise the truck looks much the same as when first built in the early 1930s.

Hugo Zacchini was an artist working in oils. He spent his last days in Fontana, and died on October 20, 1975, his 77th birthday.

Bruno Zacchini was the third oldest of the brothers. Bruno was the prime mover in the organization and operation of the Zacchini carnival from 1939 to 1947. He had acted as trigger man for Hugo since arriving in the United States in 1929. Following Mario's retirement Bruno was a bullet with Hugo from 1941 to 1944. In 1944 he trained his daughter Silvana as a bullet and she made her first jump on June 14, 1944, on the Zacchini carnival using the #6 double. This cannon was redeemed by Hugo later that season.

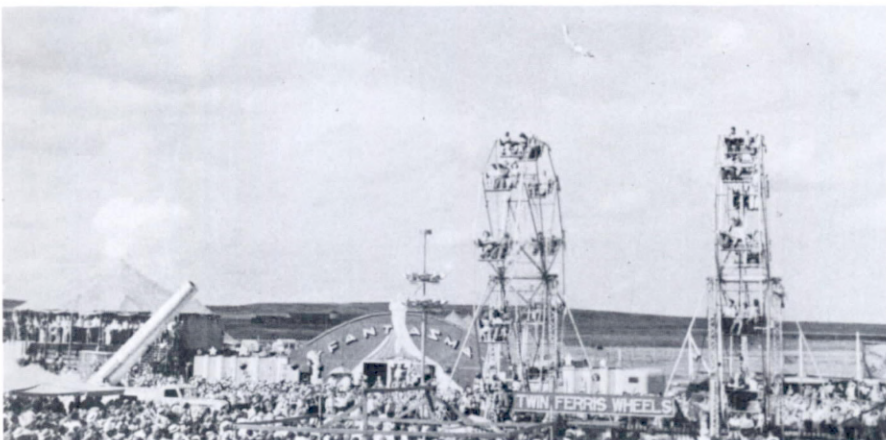
During 1945 and 1946 Bruno designed and built the super repeating cannon in Sarasota. This unit was the sleekest design to that time and was mounted on a GMC truck. Brother Teobaldo, who was making a name for himself as a carnival dark ride builder worked with Bruno in the construction of this cannon #10. The cannon was completed in 1947 and his daughter Silvana was the first bullet with her

Father as the trigger man. The act was presented on the Zacchini carnival as well as in grandstand shows and at Shrine dates.

The October 18, 1947 *Billboard* carried an ad announcing the Bruno Zacchini super repeating cannon, presenting for the first time the bullets in the semi-nude. The bullets were Silvana and Roberto. The costumes worn were indeed a departure from the standard traditional horsehide jump suits. The two bullets wore boots, short pants and short sleeve jackets, plus helmets.

The act was booked by George Hamid and appeared in 1948 on the Hamid-Morton Circus. Silvana was joined by her Aunt Simone Loyal as the double cannonballs. They were awarded gold medals as the first two women to be shot from a cannon simultaneously on March 6, 1948. Roberto was a substitute bullet, but he had bad luck and was injured in Milwaukee in February of 1948 and then suffered a serious neck injury in Buffalo at the end of March that prevented his continuing with the act. Simone continued with Silvana the rest of the season. It was a month or so after Silvana and Simone first

Vittorio Zacchini is shown making a two ferris wheel jump on the Goodman Wonder Shows carnival in 1941. Aut Swensen Collection.



Following the wreck and fire in 1946, the barrel was remounted on a new Diamond T truck by Edmondo to become #9. This is still in active use by Son Hugo II. Dave Price Photo.

presented their act that Edmondo had his new double cannon ready and his daughters Egle and Duina made the twin jump.

It was also 1948 that Ildebrando Zacchini died on July 17, in Tampa, Florida.

In 1949 the Bruno super repeating cannon was booked on the Cole Bros. Circus. Appearing with Silvana as a bullet was Donald. Donald was Donald Northdorft, who was later the ring master and announcer on the Polack Bros. Circus.

During the 1950 season Bruno booked the act on various Shrine dates, continuing to use Silvana and Donald. Then cannon #10 was retired for 12 years. It was then leased to brother Emanuel who remodeled it and placed it on a semi-trailer. In 1972 the cannon was returned to Bruno. He restored it back to near its original configuration on a straight truck. In May of 1976 it was placed in the Ringling Museum of the Circus in Sarasota, where it can be seen today.

Emanuel is number four son. He had joined his brothers in the United States in the early 1930s. Emanuel presented a roping and whip cracking act in the after show on Ringling-Barnum, while with brothers Hugo, Bruno and Mario had the double cannon on the big show until the 1937 season.

He went with the #6 double cannon to Atlantic City's Steel Pier in 1938 and began making jumps as a substitute bullet for either Hugo or Mario.

In 1939 Emanuel, Bruno and Vittorio built a new cannon, mounting it on an International truck. The barrel and firing unit were revived from the original Saurer cannon that Hugo had first used on Ringling-Barnum in 1929. This International unit was cannon #7. With Emanuel as the bullet the unit was on the James A. Strates carnival at least part of the 1939 season, and was also with the Zacchini Bros. Shows

that year. It was in 1939 or 1940 that Emanuel set the Family record (and probably all time record) for the length of a shot from a cannon. All cannon acts, Zacchinis and others, that appeared as free acts on carnivals were shot over one or two ferris wheels. For a period of about a week Emanuel made jumps over three ferris wheels, a distance of 225 feet. This was by far the longest shot on record. But this was too dangerous to continue, although there were no mishaps or accidents, it was discontinued, and he went back to the standard two wheels.

During the 1940s Emanuel and cannon #7 appeared on a number of carnivals including Cetlin & Wilson, Kirkwood and Gem City. The cannon in its original configuration is pictured in a *Life* magazine article published on April 26, 1948. It was shown parked next to Edmondo's #8 with the whole Zacchini family posed in front.

In the early 1950s, perhaps 1954, the cannon was remodeled, placing a rounded more modern body on the back of the truck to support the barrel. During the 1954 and 1955 seasons Emanuel had the cannon on the Bailey Bros.-Cristiani Circus, playing ballparks. As noted earlier, for some reason he did not make the trip to Alaska with this show, but was replaced by Hugo and the #6 White cannon. By this time Emanuel had retired from jumping and his daughter Flora was serving as his bullet with son Manuel Jr. as an alternate. Both Flora and the cannon are pictured in the Bailey-Cristiani program. Lucio Cristiani had been impressed with Hugo's act on the King and King-Cristiani circuses in 1951, 1952 and 1953. He had booked the Emanuel cannon on Bailey-Cristiani, and when the new Cristiani Bros. Circus was opened in 1956 Emanuel and daughter Flora were with the show. He remained with the Cristiani show for the 1957, 1958 and 1959 seasons.

This is cannon #10, a double built by Bruno Zacchini in 1947. It is pictured here on Cole Bros. Circus in 1949. Jim McRoberts Collection.



Simone Loyal and Bruno Zacchini's daughter Silvana, the first two women to be shot at once. Sylvana Z. Meluzzi Collection.

Spanish wire walker Luis Munoz replaced Flora as the projectile during the last two years. Munoz then went on to buy, with the help of the Beatty-Cole Circus, the Wilno cannon, which he presented on that circus.

The International #7 cannon then went to Edmondo and his son Eddie. The unit was then remodeled a second time in the Edmondo shop in Tampa. During the 1960 season it was on the Hamid-Morton Circus. Eddie Zacchini presented the act using Ruth Patterson as the bullet on Shrine shows he produced and in 1967 it was on the Cardin-Johnson show for the season. This cannon was retired in the late 1960s and is now parked on Edmondo Zacchini's property in Tampa.

Around 1961 Emanuel began planning a new cannon act. He contacted CHS member George DaDeppo, an industrial designer in Detroit, Michigan. Emanuel advised DaDeppo that he wanted to build the cannon on a semitrailer so that the barrel could drop down lower, instead of resting on the cab roof causing problems getting into some buildings. Working with the

basic dimensions DaDeppo designed the "Human Missile Launcher." Emanuel had arranged to lease the double cannon #10, built and owned by brother Bruno. The barrel and firing unit were then mounted on a semi-trailer, using the DaDeppo design, with some modifications. DaDeppo's original drawing and the finished unit are pictured with this article.

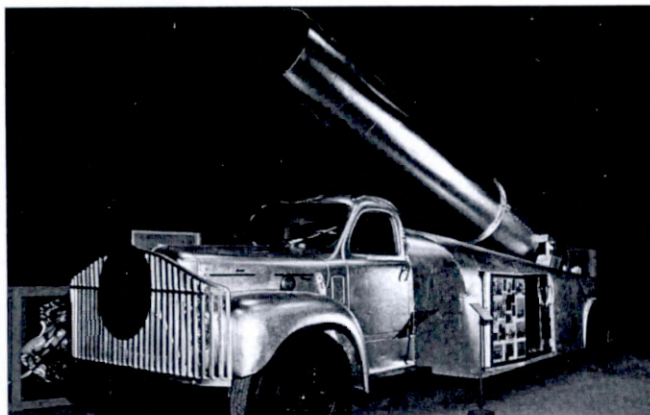
The X-15, as it was called was first used in 1962. Emanuel, Jr. served as one of the bullets along with a young lady named Marsha Upton. The act appeared on a number of Shrine and promotional circuses in the early 1960s. In 1966 Emanuel took the cannon to Australia. Later in 1966 and in 1968 the cannon was on the Atayde Circus in Mexico. The act was on the Paul Kaye show also in 1968.

The X-15 double cannon was booked for the Red Unit, 100th anniversary show of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus in 1970. By now Emanuel, Jr. had been joined by his wife Linda. Linda Fleck had grown up in Madison, Wis., and had appeared with her Father John in an acrobatic act.

The Ringling-Barnum season opened in Venice, Fla., on January 9, 1970. The sixth stand of the season was Jacksonville, on February 3 and 4.

The last act of the last performance in Jacksonville on February 4, 1970, husband and wife slammed together in the net, injuring both seriously. Manuel, Jr., age 27, suffered a fractured spine and Linda, age 21, a broken neck and arm. A UPI report quoted young Zacchini as follows. "I knew before I was out of the mouth of the cannon that something was wrong. I doubled up in the air, grabbed my head and hit Linda. The cannon was apparently too cold and the net in which we were to land after the 140 foot flight was too tight. I am supposed to fly over her and land on the other side of the net, but as I was leaving the cannon I saw she had landed about where I was supposed to

Bruno's double cannon is shown here as it is today exhibited in the Ringling Museum of the Circus in Sarasota. Ringling Museums Photo.





In 1947 Edmondo built his double naming it the Super XX. This is #7 and is still used on occasion.

land. The cannon has to be a perfect 80 degrees in order for our act to work right. The net was too tight, it had been so wet we set it tight, then it dried out and tightened up even more. The temperature is terribly critical when two people are being fired. The net is only 53 ft. long and there must be 10 ft. between us."

Linda underwent emergency surgery and was listed in critical condition. She was later placed in traction and in a few days the partial paralysis was disappearing. Two months after the accident she was out of bed and on the road again, although she had to learn to walk again. She was on crutches for 11 months. Manuel, Jr. was back in the show in a few weeks and completed the season bringing his ex-partner Marsha Lee Upton as the second bullet.

However Marsha broke her ankle when her foot became entangled in the net after landing during the Madison Square Garden engagement. Manuel, Jr. worked alone for the rest of the season. Emanuel, Jr. went on to the Disney on Parade show as head rigger. The X-15 cannon remained parked at the rear of the Zacchini home in Sarasota for two years and was then returned to its original owner brother Bruno. Emanuel Zacchini retired from the circus and operated a ride on the Royal American Shows.

Bruno restored the cannon back to near its original design on a straight truck and donated it to the Ringling Museum of the Circus, in Sarasota, Fla., in 1976. It can be seen there now.

Teobaldo is the youngest of the brothers. He came to America in 1932 to join Edmondo and Vittorio. Teo went to plant High School, in Tampa, and spent every summer on the road, either

helping Edmondo in shooting Vittorio, or with a photo galley on the carnivals where the cannon act was appearing. He went to Tampa University and received a degree in Chemistry. He was part of the Zacchini Bros. Shows in 1939, working in the office. During the war Teo worked in the Tampa shipyards, and in 1945 built his first ride, a fun house. He is now the best known builder of dark rides for carnivals in the country. His extensive shop in Sarasota is active, with the

This one sheet poster was used in 1934 to advertise the new double cannon. Interesting to note that the Zacchini name is not mentioned.



Hugo II is shown on the left with his Father Edmondo at the Ohio State Fair in August of 1977. Ron Houston is on the right. Hugo with his single and Ron using Edmondo's double, as a single, are the only active Zacchini projectiles.

help of his sons Chino and Renny. He left the Royal American Shows in 1977 after spending seven years with the show.

Teobaldo is the only brother not to have been active in the cannon business, but he has built a name for himself as one of the outstanding carnival ride manufacturers in America.

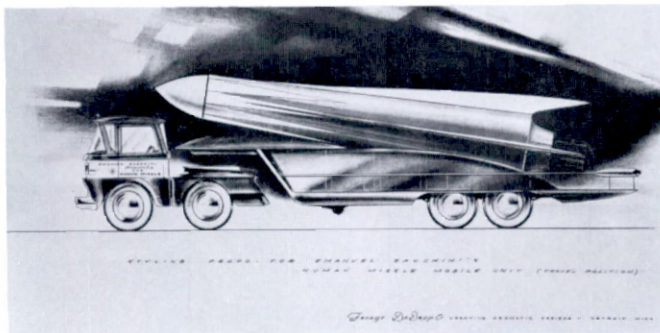
What is it like to be shot out of a cannon? Newspaper interviews with various Zacchini family members and others that they have used as projectiles all suggest the same answer—Like getting a hard kick in the seat of the pants that would knock you across a building. All printed information, by way of interviews, describe the design of Zacchini cannons much like this one that appeared in the Milwaukee Journal on August 24, 1959. "Zacchini's machine for hurling humans is a ponderous but simple one. Inside the big barrel are two smaller ones, each fitted with a piston and casing for the legs of the person to be shot. The top barrel for the man, carries 225 pounds pressure and the lower one, for a girl, 175 pounds. This fires the man over the girl and lands him ahead in the net. A firecracker, synchronized with the firing, gives the impression of an explosion." In a 1945 interview Egle Zacchini had these comments: "The person in the gun is not blasted out by a charge of explosives. The explosion and the accompanying flash of fire is just a bit of razzle-dazzle to dress up the act. The person inside the gun is inside a cylinder that is attached to a piston pushed by compressed air. When the gun is fired the piston plunges forward and the cylinder

moves up just a few feet, but at a speed of 400 miles per hour. The speed past the muzzle of the gun is much slower, but the human bullet gets a tremendous push out of the gun. You black out for a moment when you come out, but quickly you regain consciousness in the air and it is well that you do, for as soon as you can you must manipulate your body to land just right in the net. It's all a matter of technique and timing. In the cylinder you must crouch just right. Plus you must have enough courage and faith to believe you can do it."

In the May 1963 issue of *Argosy* magazine, Walter Patterson told how Edmondo trained him to be a human projectile. "My training began in Florida in a practice lot behind the Zacchini homes in Tampa. First you are fitted with your own piston which is divided into metal trousers that are tailored to your legs like the fingers of a glove. This supports your legs and prevents them from buckling and breaking under the fantastic pressure of the kickoff. You are fitted with a resilient horsehide suit that gives broad abdominal support. Mainly the suit protects you as you slide out the barrel, and keeps the net from tearing your skin when you land. The suit is white, so you can be clearly seen while traveling through the air. You also wear a helmet.

After I had been fitted up, I started taking short puffs into a net ten feet away, learning the roll that would lay me flatly into the mesh. As the distance was increased, Edmondo recorded the air pressures and the distances, and told me to keep careful track of my weight and not to let it vary more than a pound or two. As the distance of the shots increased the shock mounted until I blacked out. To say that you always black out under the full blast would be technically true, although you are not unconscious in the sense that you come out of a dream and find yourself high in the air flying like a rocket. What happens during the initial thrust, in the intense split second

This is George DeDeppo's original drawing from which the Emanuel Zacchini X-15 was built in 1962 in Sarasota. George DeDeppo Collection.



when you are taking the maximum Gs, thought is impossible. The more often you have been shot, the sharper you are in preceiving the raw sensations during the blast and the quicker you are to start making corrections during the trajectory. Flying over 100 miles an hour, you can make slight movements that keep you lined up for a perfect landing, but someone sitting in the stands wouldn't appreciate how you are fighting for control, and they do not appreciate the landing. The net just looks soft, because you sink so deep. But that net whangs back like a colossal slingshot, and you are just a pebble. The only way you can take the whip is against the broad surfaces of your back and legs, flat. If you overroll, you go in on your feet and legs and the downward force drives your head between your knees, and then the whip-back tries to crack you to pieces. If you underroll, you go in head first; and human necks are just not designed to take that kind of punishment. A good acrobat shouldn't have any trouble, because even if you start your roll late, you can get your head around quickly, meet the net with the back of your shoulders, rolling, and flatten pretty much as the slack net rides down. I trusted Edmondo because of his terrific record, I realized that if he gave me too much or too little air, my timing would be way off."

Although pressure is adjusted for each individual, early on continual experiments with dummy bullets have established rough correlations for the angle of the barrel, the air pressure, the weight of the bullet and the curve of the trajectory. A 48 degree angle, for example, and 200 pounds of air per square foot will fire a bullet 100 feet high and 200 feet in distance, and he will leave the barrel at a velocity which the Zacchinis claim reaches 400 miles per hour, but which others say cannot exceed 100 miles per hour. Outdoors the bullet must reckon with wind drift. This is the maximum shot ever attempted, and even the Zacchinis do not make a regular practice of it.

There have been some malfunctions, but it is rare. The explosion and smoke are for effect. At the opening night performance of the Ringling show in 1930 at Madison Square Garden, the



The only special Zacchini paper to carry a true likeness of the cannon was this half sheet used by the Clyde Beatty Circus around 1955. Dave Price Collection.

explosion failed and Hugo sailed silently through the air and into the net. On numerous occasions when the release mechanism has jammed the bullet has been trapped in the fumes from the black powder which is ignited for effect. Hugo was once stuck in the barrel for 16 minutes before he was extricated. No Zacchini has ever missed the net altogether, but a number have been injured when not landing in the net properly.

The first double cannon #6 sometimes acted erratic, leaving one of the two brothers behind. For a period of time it was used as a single until changes were made in the construction. Later doubles built by Edmondo and Bruno functioned well.

The inside design of the firing unit is closely guarded by the Zacchinis, none will discuss the Family secret. Various interviews tell of the compressed air pistons, an article in the February 1941 issue of *Mechanix Illustrated* was illustrated with a cutaway drawing showing the air cylinders. In the first installment of this cannon series the basic design of

Manuel Zacchini, Jr. and his wife Linda are shown with the last Zacchini cannon built. This photo was taken on the Ringling-Barnum Circus in 1970. Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus photo.



the cannons used by non-Zacchini acts was detailed.

Most of these "other" acts used rubber shock cord as the power for moving a catapult mounted on a track inside the barrel. A wench or gearhead motor was used to draw the shock cord down to the firing position. The catapult stopped at the end of the inside of the barrel, but the projectile continued from the force. The Zacchinis do not discuss the use of shock cord, however their concern for temperature might suggest its use. In any case the inside workings of the Zacchini cannons remains a mystery, unknown to outsiders, including the author.

A quick review of the various cannons built by the Zacchinis is as follows: Cannon #1 was built in Malta in 1922. Cannon #2 was built in Barcolna in 1926. Cannon #3, the first on a (SPA) truck was built in Turin, Italy, in 1927. Cannon #4 was built to come to America, in Paris, France, in 1928 and was mounted on a Saurer truck. Cannon #5 was built by Edmondo on a Stewart truck in 1930. Cannon #6 was built in 1933 in Tampa, Florida, on a White truck, it became the first double cannon in 1934. This #6 unit replaced the Sauer #4 on the Ringling-Barnum Circus. Cannon #7 was built in Tampa, or Sarasota, in 1939, using the barrel and firing unit from the retired #4. It was mounted on an International truck and was built by Emanuel, Bruno and Vittorio. Cannon #8 was built by Edmondo in Tampa, in 1940 and was

mounted on a Diamond T truck. Cannon #9 was built by Edmondo in 1946 using the barrel and firing unit from #8 which had been wrecked. Cannon #10, a double, was built on a GMC truck by Bruno in Sarasota, in 1947. Cannon #11, also a double, was built by Edmondo in Tampa in 1947, it is mounted on a White truck. Cannon #12 was built in Sarasota in 1962 by Emanuel using the barrel and firing unit from Bruno's #10. The cannon was mounted on a semi-trailer and was pulled by a Ford truck tractor.

Of these 12 Zacchini cannons built between 1922 and 1962 only five remain. The #6 White double, last owned by Hugo, is in Fontana, California, and is not in operating condition. The #10 was donated by Bruno to the Ringling Museum of the Circus and is on display in Sarasota. It too is not operable. Cannon #7 is parked on Edmondo's property in Tampa and although not used in recent years could be placed in working condition in a short time. Cannon #9 the Diamond T single is actively in use by Hugo II, Edmondo's son. Cannon #11 is still used on special dates. The last two mentioned units are also parked on Edmondo's property in Tampa when not in use.

Five of the brothers have been projectiles, Hugo, Vittorio, Mario, Emanuel and Bruno. Second generation bullets were Edmondo's children: Egle, Duina, Eddie and Hugo II; Hugo's son Hugo, Jr. (Butch); Emanuel's daughter and son Flora and Emanuel, Jr. and Bruno's daughter Sylvana.

The Zacchini Family name has been associated with the circus in Europe and the United States longer than any other family still performing. Only one other, the Hannefords, can rival them in the longevity of their contribution to circus history.

The author is most appreciative of the sincere cooperation and help in preparing this article offered by Bruno Zacchini and his daughter Silvana, and Edmondo Zacchini and his son Hugo. Others contributing information and material were Frank Mara, Art Miller, Aut Swensen, Dave Price, Marv Kreiger, John VanMatre, George DaDeppo, Charlie Campbell and Dean Jensen. The Circus World Museum was most helpful in allowing full use of their reference files.

Supplement To First Installment

Since the first installment was published in 1976 three new cannons have been built.

David Smith has built a second cannon that is appearing with the Hubert Castle Circus.

Elvin Bale introduced a "jet-propelled rocket launcher" on the Ringling-Barnum Circus in January of 1978. This unit does not have a barrel.

The Royal Hanneford Circus began using a new cannon in the fall of 1978. The bullet on the Hanneford show is Marck Kroly. Both the Bale and Hanneford units were constructed by the G & G Metals shop in Venice, Florida.

Season's Greetings

to
**Circus Performers And
Circus Fans Everywhere**

Grace Weckwerth
C.F.A. P.E.T.A. C.H.S.
C.C.A. and C.F. Great Britain

To Circus Friends and Fans Everywhere Heartiest Greetings of the Season

Joe M. Heiser Jr.
C.H.S. No. 479
Houston, Texas



Season's Greetings



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EVERYWHERE

FROM

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OF THE

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IN

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

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Photo No. 1—American steam calliope with six horse hitch in Indianapolis, Ind., May 3, 1946. Pfening Collection.

repairing old ones. Whitey Warren's crew had finished the stock cars and were now redecking the flats. Paul Nelson, Mahlon Campbell, and John Smith were breaking new menage stock and Earl Page was handling the sea lions. Harry Thomas was to leave on January 26 with a carload of stock for Orrin Davenport's Shrine date in Grand Rapids, Mich. and they would continue on tour playing various winter dates until early March.

The January 26, 1946 *Billboard* reported that Zack Terrell had hinted the show would have some startling new colored lights in the performance this coming season but he was hush-hush on details. New color emphasis on wardrobe is being developed by Mesdames Harry McFarlan and Katie Luckey. A shipment of new sea lions, monkeys, and a Malayan bear was received recently by Eugene "Arky" Scott, menagerie superintendent.

In 1945 Cole Bros. had travelled on 25 cars, the train consisting of 1 advance, 4 stocks, 12 flats, and 8 coaches. To this number the show added during the winter 1 stock, 3 flats, and 1 coach, so that for the 1946 season the train now had a total of 30 cars—1 advance, 5 stocks, 15 flats and 9 coaches.

Although the 5th stock was that type of car, in reality it was not used to house any additional elephants, horses, or other lead stock but was utilized for storage of various equipment supplies. The number of lead type animals in 1946 was virtually the same as for the previous season. I am not positive of the origin of this car but probably it was the one that had been stored at the Louisville quarters since the show arrived there in the fall of 1940. It might be recalled that in 1940 there were 6 stocks and in 1941 with the elimination of most of the baggage stock the show was able to go out that season with only 4 stocks. One of the two surplus stocks was cut down and remodeled into a flat car and the other was stored on a siding at quarters and during the time the show would be on the road various shop equipment, tools, etc. would be stored inside and the doors securely sealed. So with the addition of another stock in 1946 it is logical this car would be placed in service. Several people have said that Orville "Curley" Stewart told them that the new storage car in 1946 held a lot of the regular quarters repair equipment so evidently the management felt it was wise to carry this equipment along with the show enroute so it could be used as needed.

The three additional flats put into use in 1946 were all of Warren Tank Car Co., manufacture. The trade publications are silent on the source of these

Cole Bros. Circus

Season of 1946

by Joseph T. Bradbury

The winterquarters in Louisville was a busy place during the early months of 1946 as Zack Terrell was enlarging his Cole Bros. Circus to a 30 car show, the most it had travelled on since 1938. In fact you would have to go back to the winter of 1937-38 when the No. 2 show, Robbins Bros., was being framed to equal the activity now taking place in the Cole quarters. Terrell was also preparing for the coming season which he was expecting to be another 1919—the greatest circus season ever in his opinion.

Work in the various shops started well before the birth of the new year in

order to get done all that was necessary to have the show ready to roll on opening day in mid April.

The January 19, 1946 *Billboard* said that things were humming at the Louisville quarters as crews worked at top speed to have everything ready for the April opening. Under supervision of Orville "Curley" Stewart the paint shop had already completed all cages and the wagon shops were busy constructing new baggage wagons and

Photo No. 2—Arthur Hoffman making side show opening in Indianapolis, Ind., May 3, 1946. Pfening Collection.



cars. Several sources are possible. Both the Beckman & Gerety and Rubin & Cherry carnivals which were no longer on the road should have had surplus cars for sale in addition to those going to Russell Bros. and Dailey Bros. in 1945. In any event, in all probability the Warren flats had seen some show use in the past.

Likewise, it is not certain where Terrell purchased the 9th coach which was used in 1946. Best bet is that it was a former system car coming from a railroad. Additional sleeper space was needed in 1946 especially to house the large Cristiani family and other acts being engaged for the season.

Color scheme for the 1946 train was as follows: Stocks, red with title in same color on a white letterboard; Flats, yellow with title in blue-black; Coaches, red with title in white for all except Terrell's private car, Owensboro, which was painted Pullman green with lettering in white. No information is available on color scheme of the advance car but it was probably red with white lettering.

Gordon Potter caught Cole Bros. at South Bend, Ind., June 21, 1946 and made the following notes.

TRAIN

1 advance
9 coaches, Nos. 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, and Owensboro, Ky.

5 stock cars, Nos. 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34.

15 flat cars (as follows):

9 built by Warren, Nos. 35, 36, 37, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, and 49.

4 built by Mt. Vernon, Nos. 38, 40, 42, 43.

1 old style straight side Mt. Vernon, No. 39.

1 cut down from a former stock car, No. 41.

Total cars in train—30.

Other notes on Potter's say there were 13 elephants, some zebras and camels, and 10 cage wagons in the menagerie. Big top had 4 center poles, and menagerie 6.

The show carried approximately 15 additional vehicles in 1946 which were loaded on the 3 flat cars. The most significant wagon to be added was the America steam calliope. It had not been used on the show since 1940 and had been stored at the Louisville quarters since then. The instrument as well as the wagon was completely renovated. Color scheme for the wagon was basically white with red and blue trim in a patriotic motif. The show acquired a Ford truck to be used by the maintenance department, another Caterpillar tractor, and a large school bus for use in moving personnel from the train to lot and back. The station wagon which had been carried for a few seasons doing this chore was retained, however instead of being loaded on a flat as such, it was now carried inside a new wagon, No. 104, which after being unloaded was used



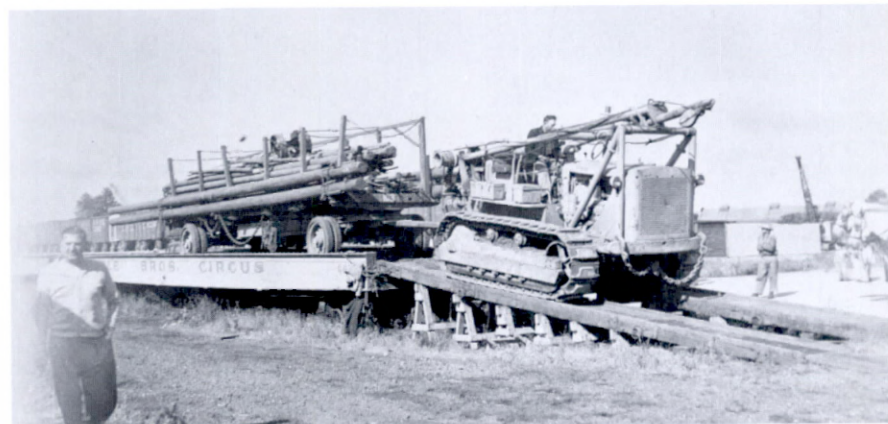
Photo No. 3—Cole Bros. cages in corralled menagerie, season of 1946. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.

on the lot as a first aid or medical department. Another major wagon built for the 1946 season was No. 64 which was used to house the fighting lion, a new addition to the sideshow, which would be worked by Capt. Frank Phillips. Various sideshow props were also loaded in the wagon. Another light plant wagon was built, plus a 2 wheel stake driver, gilly wagon, elephant department wagon, several more seat wagons, and a stringer wagon. In the past few years some of the stringers had to share a wagon with props, but now the show had two stringer wagons as it did in the mid 1930's.

The following is an unofficial list of additional vehicles carried in 1946 which should be fairly accurate.

1. Two wheel stake driver.
2. Gilly wagon.
3. No. 53, light plant.
4. No. 104, garage wagon (station wagon loads inside, used as first aid department on lot).
5. Tractor.

Photo No. 4—Caterpillar tractor pulling No. 103, pole wagon, down runs during Cole Bros. unloading, season of 1946. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.



6. Ford truck, maintenance department.

7. No. 71, commissary.

8. No. 94, seats.

9. No. 86, chairs.

10. No. 89, props.

11. No. 76, elephant department.

12. America steam calliope.

13. No. 64, sideshow fighting lion den and props.

14. No. 102, stringers.

15. School bus.

Ten of these new wagons on the list were built in the quarters' shops with Charlie Luckey in charge. Each vehicle was equipped with hard rubber, carnival type, wheels, same as the rest of the wagons had. This type wheel was also placed on the America steam calliope, replacing the steel tired sunbursts it formerly had.

Color scheme for baggage wagons in 1946 was red with titling and numbering in white (or silver).

Cages continued to have a variety of colors on them with white predominating. Gradually as the years went by the cages were losing all of their former carvings and decorative "gingerbread". However, they were painted and decorated most attractively and presented a pleasing appearance although the purists among the fans still couldn't stand what they considered the atrocious looking hard rubber tired wheels.

As mentioned before the lead stock

as well as the animal population in general remained essentially the same as the year before and the increased train size didn't reflect in that department. The elephant herd still had 13 elephants—Big Babe, Carrie, Louie, Jean, Little Jenny, Nellie, Tessie, Wilma, Blanche, Big Jennie, Little Babe, Trilby, and Kate.

The show as was customary for the past several years furnished a number of animals, acts, and some props in the various indoor winter circuses. On March 16, while in St. Paul, Minn. to handle the Cole equipment used at the annual Shrine circus in the city, General Agent J.D. Newman, suffered a heart attack and was placed in St. Joseph Hospital in a critical condition. Terrell immediately sent P.A. Branson to take over Newman's duties. It was obvious that Newman's condition would not let him return any time soon to resume his duties as general agent so Branson was given the job of lining up the show's early season route.

Getting all of the equipment ready for the road in 1946 was a real chore and the various quarters' shops were at times hardpressed for help. The following advertisement appeared in the March 16, 1946 *Billboard*.

"Would like to have for Cole Bros. Circus, Painters and Decorators, also Men who could stripe and letter. Could use you at once. We have all accommodations here at our winter quarters. Wire or Call us collect. George Churchill, Gen. Supt., Paint Shop, Louisville, Ky."

So far there had been little in the trade publications about the 1946 Cole performance which was being put together. One note did say that Max Bertei and his Chamberty Trio which had been with Ringling-Barnum during the New York engagement in 1945 had signed with Cole. This was a top notch casting act and a major addition to the program.

The March 23, 1946 *Billboard* finally broke the news about Cole's performance plans with headlines, "CRISTIANIS TOP COLE BILL. Many Veterans Stay on Pay Roll". The article went on to say that Zack Terrell had removed the band from his bankroll in building a smash performance for 1946. It read in part.

"Zack Terrell dug deep into his kick and came up with the Cristiani Family and several new features that add up to one of the most expensive layouts the colonel has had on the road. The Cristianis will receive top billing and present their riding, teeterboard, perch acts, as well as take part in the spec and other production numbers—Chamberty casting act has been added as has Billy Powell, tight wire walker. Back will be the Orantos, perch act, and the Mexican, Caudillo Sisters.

"Otto Griebeling again will be featured—other joeys include

Bagonghi, Brownie and Lewis, Horace Laird, Freddie Freeman, and Huffy Hoffman.

"Col. Harry Thomas said the new spec to be added would be titled 'Caravan to Mecca'—45 ballet girls will be used, Nanette, dancer, to be featured as Queen Shagaret-Al Durr. Izzy Cervone is arranging music and Florence Tennyson will again do the vocalizing.

"New wardrobe and fluorescent lighting effects will be used in the spec and Eddie Woekener will again lead the band.

"Paul Nelson is working out a new aerial ballet for 40 girls for which new music is being arranged. Nelson has also augmented his string of palominos and added 12 menage horses.

"The show will be on 30 cars. Three new flats, a sleeper, and a baggage car have been added. Show will have a large Wild West Concert and Jimmy Ray, wrestler, will be featured.

"Show has 4 big diesel light plants for the train and lot and 10 new wagons have been built in quarters as well as

Photo No. 5—Cole Bros. one sheet upright by U.S. Poster featuring the Caudillo Sisters had title in red outlined in black on a bright yellow background. Date tail is for Springfield, Ohio, May 23, 1946, one of the eleven stands the show cancelled on account of the coal strike. On May 23 the revised route put the show in Hannibal, Mo., where it became stranded because of the railroad strike. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.



several floats and chariots. The steam calliope will be carried. Tommy Comstock will play it downtown each noon. Show opens April 18 in Louisville with its customary 3 and one half day stand."

The No. 1 advance car with J.A. Gephart in charge left the quarters on April 4 to bill the first road stand at Owensboro, Ky. Ora Parks, general press representative, was scheduled to handle the opening stand in Louisville and on April 10 was joined by Fred K. Knowlton, Emmett Sims, Robert North, and A.J. Clark, the latter a newcomer to the press staff. Col. Harry Thomas would again handle the radio publicity during the season.

"The April 6, 1946 *Billboard* carried the customary "Call" advertisement which read, "CALL, CALL, CALL. For the greatest circus performance ever presented in the United States of America. Opening April 18, 19, 20, 21 in the State Fair Grounds, Louisville, Ky. Musicians and performers report for rehearsals on April 16 and 17. Cole Bros. Circus, State Fair Grounds, Louisville, Ky."

With Cole Bros. as well as the rest of the nation's circuses ready to head out for the 1946 season it might be well to look at the general signs of the times and atmosphere prevailing in the country. World War II had ended back in mid August 1945 and although things were gradually getting back to normal, the government was still operating pretty well on a wartime basis as it had for the past four years. The draftees who were called for the duration of the war plus six months soon found out that what happened on the battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay last September when the Japanese signed the instrument of surrender didn't mean necessarily that the war was over. In the eyes of Congress, only Congress could officially declare the war was over, so the draftees' six months-plus could then begin. (Congress did say it was all over in 1947.) In any event, logistically, with the army scattered all over the world, it would be virtually impossible for every GI to be home and discharged within 6 months. It would be well into 1946 before even the bulk of the armed forces would be discharged. Rail transportation problems in the States continued and the Office of Defense Transportation still ruled the roost and held the fate of the railroad shows such as Cole in its hands. There were still some shortages of vital materials a circus needed although these were fast disappearing. What was eased most of all was the labor situation. While not back to normal, the help situation was far better than it had been for the last few years. Although the next few months would say loud and clear that 1946 was not going to be another 1919, still at the beginning of



Photo No. 6—Cole Bros. one sheet flat depicting the unloading of the train was printed by Erie and had yellow lettering. It had been used by the show for many seasons and in earlier years had portraits of Adkins and Terrell in the upper left corner where wording "America's Favorite Show" appears. Date tail is for Rockford, Ill., June 17, 1946. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.

the season show owners were extremely optimistic, none more so than Terrell.

Rumors had been numerous for months that several parties were interested in purchasing Cole Bros. Most persistent rumor had it that a New York syndicate headed by Billy Rose and/or Mike Todd wanted it. Also, Ben Davenport's name was mentioned, however he had rapidly accumulated a fair size railroad circus called Daily Bros. which was prospering and growing rapidly and although no doubt he could have welcomed the Cole title and prestige it is questionable he was ever a serious contender. For sure the New York group wanted Cole Bros. badly.

The 1946 circus season was now here. Four railroad shows were ready to go out, including Ringling-Barnum, 86 cars; Cole Bros. 30 cars; Dailey Bros., 20 cars; and Clyde Beatty, 15 cars. (Both Cole Bros. and Dailey Bros. had added 5 cars from the previous season.) Motorized circuses going out were King Bros., Bailey Bros., Mills Bros., Sparks, C.R. Montgomery, Al G. Kelly-Miller Bros., Stevens Bros., James M. Cole, Zallee Bros., Barr Bros., Banard Bros., 101 Ranch Wild West (Jimmy Woods, operator), Buck Owens Wild West; Selles Bros.,

Bradley & Benson, Hunt Bros., M.L. Clark and Sons, Escalante Bros., Bell Bros., and Bond Bros. It was the largest number of circuses that had hit the road in many years and their owners hoped the natives would come through their doors "laughing and scratching" in great numbers.

Cole Bros. 1946 season began at Louisville, April 18-21, as scheduled. The April 27, 1946 *Billboard* had a remarkably detailed review which told of the Cole inaugural with headlines, "COLE A SHOWMAN'S SHOW. Latest Edition on 30 Cars. Zack Terrell nixes Outside Offers to Build Most Entertaining Layout of his Career. Is Definitely a Showman's Show and by far the most entertaining and thrilling of the series—\$1.20 general admission and \$2.40 for grandstand chairs." The article continued as follows.

"Many reports that Terrell would sell his show have been made. A New York syndicate said to be headed by Billy Rose and/or Mike Todd made a deal to buy the entire show for 300 G's. After saying 'yes', Terrell changed his mind. Then reportedly Ben Davenport offered to buy it—350 G's—in any manner Terrell saw fit—healthy down payment and then installments or all of it on the head.

"There are 5 more cars—greater portion of the space on these extra cars will carry equipment designed to make it easier to up and down the show—spared no expense in refurbishing his equipment and upped the program, notably the Cristiani Family and the Chambertys.

"Terrell in his 42nd year in show-business paraded in 3 rings under the repaired big top which saw service last



Photo No. 7—Cole Bros. sideshow bally platform, Salina, Kan., June 4, 1946. Left to right are Arthur Hoffman, sideshow manager, the snake enchantress, and flageolet player. Joe Bradbury Collection.

year—150 with three 50's. The train has 15 flats, 9 coaches, 4 stocks, 1 storage, with one advance—30. Wagons are red with silver trim and lettering, flats, yellow with blue trim and lettering, coaches, red with silver tops and blue trim and lettering.

"Gas powered light plants have been discarded for two new 75 kw Caterpillar Diesels, which definitely improves the big show and menagerie lighting. Another tractor has been added with a hoist which gives the show two, designed to make the loading of canvas easier. A third tractor will be used as stake puller and a bulldozer. There are dozens of other new gadgets around the lot, including new handles for the shovels and grubbers.

Steam Calliope

"The old America wagon which stood unprotected from the elements at winterquarters for 6 years has been completely overhauled and refurbished and equipped with a steam calliope. Noonday concerts will be given on circus grounds and it will be hauled into heart of cities when it can be arranged.

"The matinee Thursday was in the nature of another tuneup after the dress rehearsal, so the season was officially started when Mayor E. Ledford Taylor of Louisville blew a gold whistle starting the Caravan to Mecca at the night performance.

"Spec costuming indicated heavy



Photo No. 9—Cole Bros. flat car loaded with cages following railroad wreck at Redding, Calif., Sept. 6, 1946. Pfening Collection.



Photo No. 8—Railroad crane lifting Cole Bros. elephant car after wreck at Redding, Calif., Sept. 6, 1946. Pfening Collection.

outlay of cash. Izzy Cervone arranged the music which gives Florence Tenyson an excellent opportunity to vocalize effectively.

"Paul and Ruth Nelson, aided by Otto Griebing offered a trampoline routine in the center ring while Brownie Baker and Dick Lewis held down the track ends while the rigging was being set for Harold Voise's two casting acts. While the rigging was being cleared, John Smith presented Barney Cole, the hind end waltzing pony.

"Ballet working under lusterlite brought on Ruth Nelson for a single trap routine. She closed with one-arm planges. After the clowns walked it once, Gee Gee Engesser and the 16 horse Roman hitch was presented which is definitely a thriller. Horses pounding down the narrow track, kicking shavings into the stands almost put the spectators in the act.

"Orantos, back for another season, had the center spot in the perch display chiefly because rigging prevented the Davisos (Cristianis) from working their lofty perch there. Orantos were greeted solidly, but Davisos turn caught the most attention. The Del Murls, Mexican lads, capably handled the other ring.

"Timing on the seal display was bad. Paul Nelson handled Harry, the riding fisheater, in the center ring and it was impossible for Earl Page to hold the pace with four in Ring 1. Don Beal had a nifty pony drill in Ring 3, and this section will be stronger when the seals are combined in the center, with another pony drill for Ring 1, a change said to be in the making.

"Cristiani Family principal riding turn featuring Corcaita, June, and Ortans, had their distinct applause grabbers interspersed by clown antics. Eugene (Arky) Scott's ten elephants, split into three rings, worked fast and in unison, climaxed by long mounts on

both front and back tracks. Marion Knowlton's work in the center ring was outstanding. She set a sizzling pace for Patricia Scott and Bobbie Donovan.

"Three wire acts, Billy Powell, the Caudillo Sisters, and Senor Esquedas offered plenty of variety even though Powell was handicapped by a bad fall suffered during the rehearsal Wednesday.

New Twist Okay

"Paul Nelson came up with a new one when he worked his 12 Palominos from horseback in the liberty display. Paul handled his animals in a flawless manner, working them through their familiar routine and added color by swinging his mount into the pack for the quick turns and breaks. Mahlon (Alabama) Campbell and John Smith worked groups of 8 each in the end rings for a corking display.

"Mayhap it is the modern trend because everybody's doing it, but for the first time, the Cole aerial ballet appeared in uniform garb with attendants uniformly outfitted in gold and green harlequin costumes. Eleven girls swung on ladders and anchors while 7 worked Spanish webs for a stirring picture. The 7 girls spinning hard on the webs gave it a pulse-quickenning finish. Paul Nelson staged this number.

"First nighters missed one treat as the Chambertys were unable to work. George Chamberty suffered a badly sprained left foot when he missed the mat after a miscue during the dress rehearsal and was advised to lay off for at least two days. Chamberty's rehearsal however was enough to make Terrell grin from ear to ear, even if the act does have the tendency to make the payroll top heavy.

Cristianis Take Over

"The Cristianis supplied the remaining top thrillers in the rings and they were top thrillers, indeed. In the acrobatic display the family group offered their teeterboard in the center

ring, featuring Ortans and Lucio contributing more than a full share of thrills. Ortans' feature as announced was a two and a half to a chair but was kids play compared to her successful spin from the board to a four high and she held it. Lucio's topper was a single with a full twister three high.

"The Cristianis completed their chores for the night with their family riding act, six men, and four girls that has long been a top attraction. Lucio's clowning, comparatively a new feature, really got hearty laughs and his somersaulting from one horse to another and then leaping from the rear horse to the pacer seemed almost too simple.

Horses, horses, etc.

"As Kentucky is Terrell's home state and Cole Bros. has wintered in Louisville for several years, it is only natural that the trend should be more and more toward gaited and menage horses, a trend which is particularly evident. A good portion of the program was given over to the educated equines and the reception accorded their efforts by these horse-wise natives was rousing to say the least.

"The Flying Thrillers merely went through the motions this opening night and not very well at that, as Harold Voise was badly bruised and shaken by a fall in the aerial bar number during the matinee and could not work. Without Voise the timing was bad. Voise was expected to be back in the rigging by the time the show bows in Terrell's home town of Owensboro, Monday (22).

"Hippodrome races closed the show, with Ralph Clark, a veteran Wild West cowboy, and Jimmy Ray, a wrestler, heading the concert.

"While Otto Griebing and Freddie Freeman were handicapped by a shortage of manpower in clown alley, those around proved of high calibre and they

worked through the entire performance effectively. The production numbers—the reducing machine and grab joint were well handled. Otto and Freddie stopped the show with their fight.

"The program ran two hours and three minutes without the Chamberlys. Terrell airs for a two hour show for the tour, mostly one nighters and it will take some careful timing to make it as the opening night ran as smoothly as silk. There were plenty of prop boys and even the majority had no previous experience they were directed so efficiently there was not a single delay. Eddie Woeckener has the band and can cut it.

Cole Bros. Officials

"Zack Terrell, president and general manager; Noyelles Burkhart, asst. gen. mgr.; J.D. Newman, general agent and traffic manager; Fred E. Schortemeier, general counsel; Estrella Terrell, secretary; Robert DeLochte, treasurer; Lorne Russell, chief auditor; Watson M. Koontz, general tax counsel; William Curtis, general superintendent; Joe Haworth, legal adjuster; Orville Stewart, master of transportation; Paul Nelson, director of program; Col. Harry Thomas, director of performing personnel; H.C. Leeman, timekeeper; P.N. Branson and William J. Lester, contracting agents.

Press Department

"Ora O. Parks, general press representative; Fred K. Moulton, Emmett Sims, and A.J. Clark, story men; C.S. Primrose, contracting press; Robert North, public relations.

General Staff

"Harry McFarlan, equestrian director; Arthur Hoffman, sideshow manager; James Gephart, advertising car manager; Richard O. Scatterday, national advertising representative; Karl Knudson and Billy Walsh, 24 hour men; Georgie (Laughing) Davis, steward; Eugene (Arky) Scott, menagerie superintendent; Gene Weeks, commissary supt.; Winn Partello, asst. concession manager; Frank Wise, big top ticket supt.; Mahlon Campbell, ring stock supt.; John McGraw, asst. ring stock boss; Frank Loftus, front door manager; Jack Bigger, trainmaster; George Churchill, paint shop manager; Charles Luckey, shop supt.; Josephine McFarlan, wardrobe mistress; Walter Rice, electrical supt.; Vincent Dedy, supt. of car porters.

Clown Alley

"Otto Griebing, Freddie Freeman, Joe Wilde, Alfred (Billie) Burke, Howard Bryant, Brownie Guldath, A.C. (Huffy) Huffman; Gallifilli Gagonghi, Lawrence Cross, Chamberly Trio, Billy Hudson, Horace Laird and Dick Lewis."

(The show's roster also listed 25 ballet girls.)

The 1946 program was as follows.

Cole Bros. 1946 Program

1. Caravan to Mecca, An Egyptian fantasy, featuring the show's personnel, lead stock, elephants, and two allegorical floats; conceived and staged by Harry Thomas; musical arrangements by Izzy Cervone; dances by Lillian Courtney; costumes by Mahieu of New York, and Lesters and Languay, Chicago. Special sand by Ed Straight; lighting by Walter Rice.

2. Brownie Baker and his bicycle; The Nelson's trampoline; Dick Lewis, table rock.

3. Aerial Bars—The Voice and Harold troupes.

4. Barney Cole, waltzing pony, handled by John Smith.

5. Ruth Nelson, single traps, and one-arm planges.

6. Clown walkaround.

7. Gee Gee Engesser, Roman standing ride driving a 16 horse hitch.

8. Perch acts—The Davisos, the Orantos, and the Del Murls.

9. Clowns—reducing gag.

10. Ring 1, Earl Page and sea lions, assisted by Marion Knowlton.

Ring 2, Paul Nelson presenting Harry, horseback riding sea lion.

Ring 3, Liberty ponies worked by Don Beall.

11. Principal riding act—Miss Corcaita, Miss June, and Miss Ortans (all Cristianis).

12. Clown fight, featuring Otto Griebing, Freddie Freeman, and Huffy Huffman.

13. Elephants, four in center ring, and three in each end, presented by Eugene (Arky) Scott, and worked by Bobbie Donovan, Marion Knowlton, and Patricia Scott.

14. Concert announcement, introducing Ralph Clark, wild west, and Jimmy Ray, wrestler.

Photo No. 10—Cole Bros. loaded flat cars in Los Angeles area, season of 1946. System flat at extreme left was put into use temporarily following the earlier wreck at Redding, Calif. Note overhead wires of the

15. Clown walkaround.

16. Tight wire, featuring Billy Powell, with Caudillo Sisters and Senor Esquedas in end rings.

17. Clown stop—Hot dog stand gag with explosive finish.

18. Liberty horses, featuring Paul Nelson in center ring working 12 Palominos while astride a horse. John Smith and Mahlon (Alabama) Campbell handled eight each in the end rings.

19. Aerial ballet, featuring 11 girls on ladders and anchors and 7 on Spanish webs—staged by Paul Nelson.

20. Five-gaited horses ridden by M.F. Campbell, Gee Gee Engesser, John Smith, Don Beall, Marion Knowlton, and Ruth Nelson.

21. Clowns, cut out auto gag.

22. The Chamberlys, casting bars.

23. Center ring featuring Cristianis teeterboard, staring Ortans, Four Caudillo Sisters, tumbling in Ring 1 and Bonaltis (Orantos) head balancing in Ring 3.

24. John Smith's boxing horses.

25. Second concert announcement.

26. Menage featuring Ruth Nelson with Marion Knowlton, Gee Gee Engesser, Patricia Scott, Bobbie Donovan, Don Beall, Nena Thomas, Golda Grady, Maude Moore, Ethel Freeman, John Smith, Josephine Cofield, Sadie (Babe) Woodcock, Shirley Adams, and Rita Biller.

27. High jumping horses, featuring Scotland Yard, liberty pony, and Niagara, liberty horse.

28. Easter Cloud, jitterbug horse, presented by John Smith.

29. Clown walkaround.

30. The Flying Thrillers, Harold Voise's act.

31. Hippodrome racing.

The 1946 sideshow lineup was as follows: R. Goldie Fitts, inside lecturer; Jenny Lee, snakes; Frank Phillips, fighting lion; Francine Accover, armless wonder; Francisco

Pacific Electric Railway, also that the America steam calliope has been fired up so as to be ready for downtown pull shortly after unloading. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.



(Pipo) Rolin, musical act; Fred (Manipo) Harris, magic and Punch; Carlos Rica Jrenado, Mexican juggler; Rose Westlake, astrologist; Hawaiian Village, singers and dancers; Nina Bryant and Anna Fitts, mystery. Annex dancers, Billie Dick, Jennie Arno, June Carters, and Leona Theodoro, with Ben Asabalon, flageolet player. Band and minstrels, Lockwood Lewis, leader.

The age old circus superstition that accidents come in cycles of threes hit the show at its opening date. Bill Powell, wire walker, was painfully bruised during the rehearsal on April 17th. Shortly thereafter during the same rehearsal, George Chamberty missed the mat after a slip during the casting act and sprained his left foot. Finally, Harold Voise fell ten feet to the ground when a net supporting post sprung loose during the aerial bar act early in the program of Thursday's matinee causing him painful injuries.

Following the Sunday, April 21, matinee the show's initial date was concluded and after teardown and loading the train departed for the first road stand of the new season, Owensboro, Ky., where performances were scheduled for Mondy, April 22. Strangely enough, none of the trade publications commented on business done at the opener. In all probability the show as usual had a healthy take in its home city.

Owensboro, hometown of Zack Terrell, came through with a near capacity matinee which didn't begin until 4:30 P.M. and a full night house. During the day the show took delivery on a new personnel bus with carrying capacity of 48. It was loaded on a flat car and for the rest of the season aided greatly in moving personnel between the train and lot. The next stand at Evansville, Ind., April 23, saw a near capacity matinee with a turnaway at night. Despite the good business in the

city there was sadness on the Cole lot as word was received that J.D. Newman died that day in St. Paul, Minn., after an illness of several weeks. He was 76 and had served as the Cole general agent for several years. Terrell, deeply moved over Newman's passing, told the press, "If I had any idea that J.D. Newman might not have been able to finish the season with us, I would not be the owner of this show right now. I would have sold it last winter and retired." Terrell named P.M. Branson as new general agent and A.J. Clarke of the press department got Branson's former job as contracting agent.

The train was delayed in leaving Evansville that night for two hours due to a fire in a factory near the loading runs. Fire hose laid across the tracks prevented the train's departure. Although the show didn't arrive in Terre Haute until 9:30 A.M. the following day, there was no delay in the start of the matinee and the stand produced two big houses.

Visitors who caught the show in Indiana reported that all 3 of the performers who were injured during the opening stand had made quick recoveries and were now back at work. Plaudits were heard for Paul Nelson's new feature in which he works 12 Palominos from horseback.

Leaving Indiana after only two stands the show moved over into Illinois at Decatur, April 25, where the matinee started on time to a three-quarters house and at night there was a packed tent. The following day at Springfield saw two full houses and at Peoria, April 27, the train arrived late delaying the matinee for over an hour but there were still two overflow houses on hand. On Sunday, April 28, the train was four hours late in arriving in Champaign due to mechanical difficulties with the locomotive. There was a good crowd on hand at the scheduled hour for the matinee but by the time the performance started many had left. Rain fell before and during the night show but a fair crowd was on hand. Bloomington, Ill. was a good one

with a full matinee and straw house at night, however at Danville the next day the elements got nasty again but a good crowd was at the matinee despite threatening weather. Light showers fell early in the evening but there was still a full house for the night show.

A return to Indiana came at LaFayette, May 1, where an all night rain greeted the arrival of the show. The lot was muddy and set up was most difficult, but despite the poor weather there was a strong matinee crowd and full night house. Next came a four day stand in Indianapolis, May 2-5, and on the first day the weather man got downright ugly. A heavy rain delivered a staggering blow to the show attempting to set up, so rough was it that the matinee had to be called off. The night show did go on to a fair house. Business was better for the remainder of the stand.

Back to one day stands additional Indiana dates were played at Kokomo, then Ft. Wayne where it took two night performances to take care of the crowd, next, Marion where there were two full houses; and finally Anderson where it became necessary to close the ticket wagons as no more of the crowd wanting to see the show could be packed into the big top.

Coverage of Cole activities was plentiful in the *Billboard* during the first weeks of the new season. It was mentioned that Arthur Hoffman, sideshow manager, had dipped into the past and come up with a great bally feature in the untameable lion act, one in which Frank Phillips, veteran trainer, handled the big male Nubian. It was also noted that opposition from other shows would be lively this season. Cole was booked for Canton, Ohio, May 27, with Ringling-Barnum scheduled for July 4, while at

Photo 11—Cole Bros. cages loaded on flat cars, season of 1946. Photos 11 through 16 were taken by Don F. Smith in Michigan at either Owosso or Pontiac.

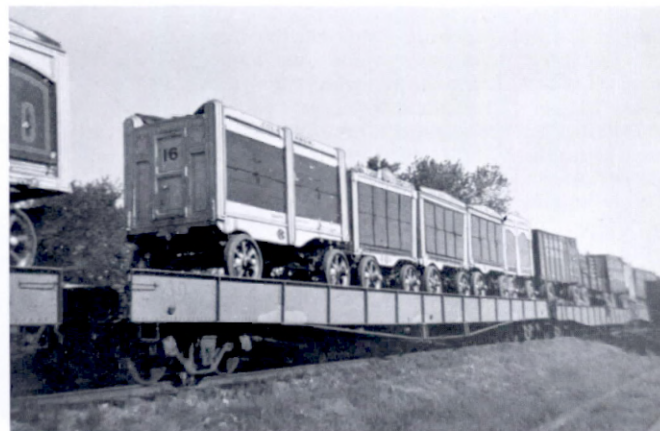


Photo 12—Cole Bros. cages and baggage wagons loaded on flat cars, season of 1946. Flat car No. 39 in foreground is an old style Mt. Vernon. Note the straight profile at bottom of car as opposed to the newer style "fish-belly" Mt. Vernon car next to it. Don Smith Photo.



Photo No. 13—Train team pulling No. 92 wagon over a Mt. Vernon (new style) flat to the runs. In 1946 Cole Bros. carried 10 baggage horses primarily for use in loading and unloading the train. Don Smith Photo.

Parkersburg, W.Va., where Cole was booked for May 15, two shows were coming in ahead, Bailey Bros. in early May and Sparks on May 7, giving that town three circuses during the first half of the month. Freddie Freeman wrote in his column that since leaving Louisville the weatherman has been most unkind but in spite of the rain and mud, business had been okay.

In the meantime, certain events were taking place in the country which if not checked would bring disaster to the nation's newly cranked up peacetime economy and circuses on tour would be walloped as well. By mid May a nationwide coal strike had been in progress for five weeks. Supplies were dangerously low in most places while others were completely without the black stuff. The Office of Defense Transportation in early May had ordered cuts in all railroad passenger service by 25 percent and unless the strike was settled by May 15 the cut would be extended to 50 percent. ODT officials said that another 20 days of the strike would bring serious consequences. There were some diesel locomotives in operation on a few lines in those days but the vast majority of railroad engines were still powered by steam and using coal as fuel. A 12 day truce was agreed to on May 10 between the United Mine Workers Union and the coal operators but by then it was too late to avoid almost complete chaos especially in the coal regions of Kentucky, Ohio, and West Virginia where there were few diesel locomotives in use.

Terrell expected a full freight embargo to be coming in a matter of days so he obtained a special ODT permit to move directly from Anderson, Ind. to Cincinnati passing up Hamilton, Ohio which had been scheduled for May 10. Terrell didn't want to be stuck in Hamilton as a result of an embargo

caused by the coal strike. Cincinnati had already been booked for May 11-12, so he just added a third day. Terrell told the local press in Cincy that he would not make any decision on the show's future moves until Sunday night, May 12, final day of the stand. If the strike was settled by then the show would move on to its regularly scheduled date in Lexington, Ky. for the 13th, but if the embargo is still on the show would move overland to Norwood, Ohio, a suburb, for two days, and then overland again to Covington, Ky. for two days.

Although there was some bad weather in Cincinnati Cole still had big crowds on the 11th and 12th and during the final day the sun came out giving the show the first day Ole Sol decided to shine all day during the season so far.

When the engagement was concluded matters looked improved on the coal strike situation so Terrell took a gamble and ordered the train to move on to its scheduled date in Lexington, Ky. and the show played there on May 13 to a near capacity crowd in the afternoon and overflow at night.

Then it happened. The ODT nixed the scheduled movement of the Cole train out of Lexington to Ashland, Ky. over the C&O Railroad. Reason given was that there just wasn't enough coal available for movement of the circus train over that route. Of course it then became necessary to cancel dates in West Virginia at Huntington and Parkersburg and Ohio stands at Zanesville and Columbus. For three more days the Cole show sat in Lexington, unable to move but finally the Southern Railway provided a diesel locomotive to haul the train over its lines to New Albany, Indiana which was scheduled in the last minute change in routing. The show arrived in New Albany on May 17 and prepared to set up and give performances that day, however the lot to be used was in a low spot and poorly drained and the rain that came added to the difficulties and miseries of the day. However, by late that evening trucks with loads of cinders got the lot into fair enough



Photo 14—Cole Bros. elephant herd on the lot, season of 1946. Don Smith Photo.

shape to set up and hopefully show the next day. An all out publicity campaign by radio and newspaper was begun to advise the locals that Cole Bros. was in town. Radio in particular was pressed into service to spread the word. Performances in New Albany were given on May 18 and 19.

The show's original route through Ohio was now completely blown and Terrell ordered his agent to get out and stay out of the coal regions. He advised to move further westward where there were more diesel locomotives on railroads available and announced to the press that future routing of the show would depend entirely on the railroad situation.

Cole Bros. remained on the dieselized Southern Railway lines for the next two stands following New Albany, playing Princeton, Ind., May 20, and Belleville, Ill. on the 21st. Continuing in Illinois the show played Alton, May 22, then crossed the river into Missouri and was at Hannibal, May 23, when real trouble again struck.

This time the country was plagued with a nationwide railroad strike. The strike actually lasted only 48 hours but it played havoc while it was on. All trains were left where they were and the Cole Bros. train was stranded on a siding in Hannibal. However, maybe the strike was a blessing in disguise, as President Truman had had enough of it. He went before a joint session of Congress asking for legislation to draft striking railroad workers into the army and while he was in the middle of his address a strange thing happened. Word was handed to him that the strike had been settled. Evidently the boys wised up to the fact that it was now a new ball game. After all Roosevelt had been dead a year, Harry Hopkins wasn't around, and no longer could it be "cleared" with Sidney Hillman, the unions' big gun at the White House, and tradition has long held that at the Democratic convention in 1944, when the party wanted to dump Vice President Henry Wallace



Photo No. 16—Cole Bros. corralled menagerie, season of 1946. Don Smith Photo.

and replace him with Harry Truman as the new running mate, Roosevelt told the boys to "Clear it with Sidney". In any event the new president was not challenged again with such things as a national rail strike. Taking such prompt and decisive action won the new president a world of friends, in fact, this and other dramatic moves won for him the election of 1948 against what the "experts" termed insurmountable odds. In the meantime the coal strike had been settled and gradually industry and labor got on with working together to build a great post-war America.

The June 1, 1946 *Billboard* told the story of the Cole show's adversity during the rail strike in headlines, "AWAITING AT THE SWITCH—COLE LOADED AT HANNIBAL, MO." Terrell was quoted, "I never saw anything like this as long as I've been in the business. I've been thru wrecks, fights, floods, windstorms, everything that could happen to a circus but I never thought I would see one loaded that couldn't be moved when there was money in the wagon to pay the railroad." The article went on to say that this had been the second delay for Cole within ten days and has messed up two routes for P.M. Branson, general agent, and his billing crew, to say nothing about the wallop it has taken on Terrell's bankroll. First was the four day delay in Lexington, Ky., now the railroad strike. The article further described a hectic week. Cole moved to Hannibal from Alton, Ill. where only one-half house caught the matinee because of a late arrival due to time lost detouring St. Louis from Belleville, but the big top was packed at night. Belleville matinee was lost with the show arriving five hours late after a battle with the mud in Princeton, Indiana. It was Princeton's first railroad show in 20 years and the town of 8,000 came up with two surprising houses, a three-quarters matinee and capacity night house even though customers had to wade thru mud to get on the lot. A heavy rain fell

during the matinee. New Albany, Ind., May 18-19, was bad as spot had only three days billing.

The coal and rail strikes had certainly been rough on all outdoor shows, especially those that travelled by rail as did Cole Bros. Terrell's prediction that 1946 would be another 1919 was falling far short of its mark. Actually it had been like 1922 all over again and not since that hectic season which was filled with strikes, especially on various rail lines, had circuses been up against this kind of thing so much.

The rail strike cost Cole its scheduled dates at Moberly, Mo., May 24, and the next day at Sedalis. When the trains got rolling again the show moved on Sunday, May 26, to Kansas City where it was billed to appear for three days, May 27-28-29.

The June 8, 1946 *Billboard* told the story of the show's resumed route in Kansas City with headlines, "UNCRACKABLE K.C. STAR GOES OVER FOR COLE", and the article went on to say that the newspaper helped Cole immensely in its three day stand in Kansas City, doubtlessly because of the terrific blow given it by the recent strikes. The paper was liberal in its advance publicity, and later came through with some rave notices of the show. Cole hadn't had strong billing because of the tangle of dates of late but the billers did get in some healthy whacks. An early arrival from Hannibal helped. The Wabash Railroad gave the show a neat run putting it into the city at 9 A.M. on Sunday. A new lot adjacent to the Montgomery Ward store and opposite the old lot was jammed all day on Sunday. Weather was perfect. The show opened to a light matinee crowd the first day but had capacity attendance that night. The next day was better with a straw house estimated at 7,200 coming in the evening after three-quarters in the afternoon. Final day saw a capacity matinee and straw at night. Overall the Kansas City date was considered a big one. The grassy lot helped and the coaches were parked right beside it.

Leaving Kansas City, the show moved into Kansas at Emporia, May 30, Decoration Day, where it was unable to



Photo 15—Cole Bros. baggage wagon No. 71 on the lot, season of 1946. This was the former red ticket wagon used until 1944. Note sign at left of wagon, "Help Wanted, Going West to California". Don Smith Photo.

obtain the regular circus lot and forced to take a small one which put it into very crowded quarters. There was no room to erect the menagerie top so the cages and lead animals had to be corralled. Cole Bros. was the first large rail show to play Emporia since Ringling-Barnum was there in 1940. Next came two days of surprisingly poor business at Wichita which was followed by another bad take at Hutchinson. Show officials said the poor draw at Wichita could be partially explained by fact that many airplane factories in the vicinity which had previously employed thousands of persons had recently closed down. The two day stand, May 31-June 1, netted only a good single day's business. Hutchinson, ordinarily a good circus town, just didn't turn out. The matinee drew about 1,500 and the night show 2,400. That day, Danny Morony, one of the Russian Cossack troupe was injured when a horse he was riding swerved into a quarter pole causing him to suffer a fractured collarbone. Fortunately the three days of bum business were followed by two good stands at Salina and Topeka, and a return to Missouri at St. Joseph, June 6, saw a turnout of 5,000 at the matinee and a great crowd estimated as high as 8,500 (probably a little too high even with them scratching in the straw all over the place) at night. Cole officials told the trade publications they couldn't understand the mystifying in and out business for the show during its recent tour of the area and also advised that the show would pick up its originally scheduled route in Illinois and Michigan around June 20.

Cole Bros. next went into Nebraska for an evening only stand in Lincoln, June 7, followed by two performances in the same city the next day. A Sunday stand in Omaha came on June 8 to complete the Nebraska dates. Both cities came through with a good take which included two capacity houses in

Omaha. The show moved into Iowa at Atlantic, June 10, where the matinee had a half house and the tent was packed at night. Two days in Des Moines came next and also the rains, but fortunately the wet stuff appeared at a time which didn't hurt too much. The opening matinee was small but a full house was present at night and the second day found a strong matinee and full one in the evening. On the initial day a small twister came up just as the matinee ended but it failed to do any damage and the weather cleared shortly thereafter. The wind did create a scare and the show had a narrow escape but the big top was not seriously threatened because Cap Curtis had his quarter poles all staked down. Valiant work on the part of performers and workmen alike is credited with saving the menagerie, padroom, and cookhouse from possible damage. The show got a publicity break when a young buffalo escaped causing a wild chase which the local press played up.

Mason City, Iowa was played June 13 and the show had a big take at both performances. In the evening a blown fuse pitched the big top into darkness while the Orantos were in the midst of their perch act. Otto Griebing and Freddie Freeman rushed in and carried on a comedy routine by match light while Eddie Woekener's band continued to play until the lights were restored. Next the show moved into Minnesota for a single stand in that state at Albert Lea, June 14, where two capacity crowds showed up. Cole then returned to Iowa for a final date at Waterloo, June 15, where heavy rains had made the lot very muddy but fortunately the skies cleared in the afternoon. Three-quarter houses were on hand for both matinee and evening shows. During one performance Ruth Nelson suffered a shoulder injury making it impossible for her to finish her act.

Following Iowa, Cole headed eastward through Illinois playing

Photo No. 17— Cole Bros. on the lot at McCook, Neb., July 20, 1946. America steam calliope is at left and Columbia white ticket wagon at right. In back is the menagerie top. Photo by Joe Fleming.



Rockford, Elgin, and Joliet, and then it was on to Indiana for Michigan City and two days in South Bend, June 21-22.

The *Billboard* noted that at Joliet the show was on a muddy lot and a cold drizzle held the matinee to a half house with night crowd at three-quarters. In the morning enroute to the lot a wagon broke loose from its tractor on the Ruby Street hill and caused considerable damage when it struck a car driven by a local woman. Late that night after the train had pulled out for Michigan City, John Hickey, one of the show's workmen, was found dead of skull and internal injuries in the Joliet railroad yards. Coroner E.A. Kingston concluded he had been crushed between two trains. All in all it was a very rough day for Cole in that city. Fortunately, the two previous Illinois stands had been better. At Rockford, June 17, the show had a matinee just short of capacity with a full house at night in spite of oppressive heat in the afternoon and a slight rain at night. In Elgin, June 18, it was a cold and raw day and only about 300 were on hand for the matinee, but the night house was almost capacity.

Michigan City gave a fair matinee and capacity night house while both days in South Bend produced an excellent take.

Now back on its originally planned route, the show moved into Michigan with initial date coming at Jackson on Sunday, June 23, and the show remained in that state for a total of 12 one day stands. While in the region, Cole ran into a first class heat wave. The July 6, 1946 *Billboard* said that the sun had beat down on the Cole big top while the show had to ride out the heat wave in Michigan. The article also went on to say that the mercury ran merrily on high but the folks poured into the big top and the heat caused several in the audience to faint. In Jackson there was a capacity matinee and fair night house in the face of the sweltering heat wave which saw several would-be customers faint while lined up on the midway waiting for the afternoon show which had been delayed one hour. The long wait in the blazing heat was just too much for them. It was

noted the weather had been much cooler in Indiana played just prior to the Michigan trek.

The July 13, 1946 *Billboard* said that due to poor train moves between Pontiac and Adrian the first wagon did not reach the lot until 11 A.M., yet the show set up rapidly and the matinee was not over 20 minutes late. A half house came in the afternoon and a full one at night. A heavy rainstorm broke just at the matinee at Owosso, Sunday, June 30, and there was no holding of applause in their rush to get out of the wet. The tent was three quarters filled but at night the weather cleared and a near capacity crowd showed up. Similar business was done at Bay City and Grand Rapids. When Cole played Flint, Mich., June 28, personnel of the Ringling-Barnum advance car saw the show as guests of the management.

Coldwater, July 4, was the final Michigan date and then the show headed westward again and was at Elkhart, Indiana the next day where the take was termed as surprisingly good. The show crossed Illinois in four dates, Kankakee, Streator, Galesburg, and Rock Island and then headed into Iowa for its second visit of the season. There was a late arrival at Cedar Rapids, July 10, and the matinee didn't start until 4:45 P.M. The weather was extremely hot during the days in Iowa where the show also played Marshalltown and Ames and then Carroll, where the matinee was only slightly delayed despite the train not arriving until 7:30 A.M. There was light attendance in the city, but two full houses were on hand at the final stand in the state at Sioux City on July 15.

The *Billboard* reported that Cole Bros'. business since leaving Michigan had been spotty and the heat during this period had been taking its toll in attendance.

The show then headed westward again and moved into Nebraska, also for the second visit of the season, and the cooler weather soon encountered

Photo No. 18— Cole Bros. on the lot at McCook, Neb., July 20, 1946. Portion of padroom is at left, big top in center, and part of menagerie top at right. Photo by Joe Fleming.





Photo No. 19—Eddie Woeckener (with white cap and cape) and his band on the Cole Bros. lot at McCook, Neb., July 20, 1946. Photo by Joe Fleming.

was a welcomed relief. The first date was at Norfolk, where a large circus had not played in several years. Other stands in the state were at Grand Island, Hastings, and Holdrege, with the final date coming at McCook on July 20 where CHS Joe Fleming took the splendid photos which are printed in this article.

After McCook the Burlington Railroad took the show on a 245 mile run to Denver for a three day stand, July 22-24.

The August 3, 1946 *Billboard* had an interesting report on the Denver stand as well as on others played in recent days. The article said in headlines that night attendance had been big, the opener having a capacity house with turnaways the next two evenings. Downtown tickets for the night performance on July 23 were sold out by 10 A.M. and the crowds that evening were so tremendous it seemed like a second show would be necessary to accommodate them. Showers hit shortly before show time and that killed the idea for the second show but still there was a turnaway at the regular performance estimated at several thousand. There was another turnaway the next evening. Matinees, however, didn't measure up to the evening attendance. Opening matinee got a three-quarters house including about a thousand orphans and underprivileged children as guests of the *Denver Post*,

but the next two afternoons did not exceed the halfway mark very much. Both local papers gave the show a generous reception. The *Post* carried an interview with Terrell whose career with Sells-Floto dated back to the Tammen-Bonfils days in Denver. The *Rocky Mountain News* gave a three column space to art and features on Otto Griebing. Messino Bertie blamed the mile high altitude for two slips he made in the Chamberty casting act. On the first fall on Monday he suffered contusions of the side and on Tuesday he sprained a knee. Another casualty was Randy Gross whose leg was cut when she topped over a stake. The article went on to say that the show had come to Denver from McCook, Nebraska, where business was only fair. The grain harvest in progress and fact that three smaller shows had been in earlier were blamed by the local press for holding down attendance. At

Photo No. 22—Cristiani family on the Cole Bros. lot at McCook, Neb., July 20, 1946. In front row, left to right, Mugador (Paul), Ortans, and Lucio; standing in rear, (left to right), Belmonte, Pete, Daviso, Oscar, Corky, and June. Photo by Joe Fleming.



Holdrege, Neb. the day before, the show was the biggest thing that had hit town in years and it played to a good night house after a fair matinee. The show started on time despite a muddy lot caused by a two and a half inch rain the night before.

In the same issue of *Billboard*, Justis Edwards had an extremely interesting in-depth article on the Cole show and mentioned several of the show's key personnel. It was titled, "Know How Learned in Trying War Period Still Important in Making Cole Go On Time. Burkhart's Philosophy, 'Cap' Curtis Experience Big Factors". It read as follows.

"Chicago, July 27—The predicted post-war plentitude of circus labor just hasn't materialized and Cole Bros. Circus, for one, is still having to resort to the tricks learned in the war years to get up and down. As a result, an excellent record of on-time matinees is being maintained, and even, in case of late arrivals the customers' waits are being held pretty well to a minimum. But for a show of the proportions of this one—heavy even for 30 cars—it takes plenty of know-how and plenty of old-fashioned sweat. We had a chance to see for ourselves when the show played Kankakee, Ill., July 6. Due to a slow getaway from Elkhart, Ind., a 116 mile run and a hot box on the way, it was late morning when the train rolled in and past 11 o'clock when the pole wagon reached the fairgrounds lot. And the day was so hot that Tommy Comstock passed out playing the calliope.

They Get It Done

"Yet, the doors were open by 3 P.M., the menagerie sheltered the folks during the brief interval until the big top was ready, and by 3:25 Col. Harry Thomas, himself knocked out by the heat a short time before, was proclaiming 'Caravan to Mecca'. A short haul of only two blocks from the runs was a big help. However, considering the pronounced shortage of working men, it was readily apparent that other reasons accounted for the smooth and speedy way the show went up and the ease with which it came down that night.

"One of the mainmost reasons, it was generally agreed, lies in the presence, personality, and philosophy of a smiling, college educated young man, named Noyelles Burkhart. The term philosophy was suggested by Lucio Cristiani who meant just that. Someone else explained Burkhart's philosophy by calling him, 'Our Good Humor Man'.

Burkhart Can Handle 'Em

"Not that Zack Terrell's assistant manager can't be tough when occasion demands, he possesses, however, a happy faculty of tempering a vigorous

manner with amiability. He demonstrates that it is easier to get things done with a rib than a rub. He has a sympathetic ear for legitimate beefs and an effective way of handling the professional grippers and agitators. And he's on the job from the time the first wagon hits the lot in the morning until the last one is off at night. Apparently Col. Terrell has complete confidence in his brother-in-law. If Zack was on the lot in Kankakee that day, he wasn't there long enough for anyone to see much of him.

"Even with a key man like Burkhart as coordinator, it takes a lot of doubling and close harmony to move the show now as during the war. The butchers put up the menagerie (it's a rare day when the animals are corralled), the grooms are charged with getting the padroom up and down, and the Side Show people know what it is to handle canvas. Part of the daily procedure is for George Davis' cookhouse to feed as soon as the big top is in the air, regardless of time, after which all energies are turned to seats and rigging. How much 'charity pie' and other work the big show performers are called upon to do depends on how much local help has been rounded up in a town.

Recruiting Drive Production

"The hiring of local help, of course, goes on each day with varying degrees of success. The 'recruiting drive' is almost like an act in the big show at night. Toward the end of the performance, towners who want to work are seated on the curb of Ring No. 1 while one of the show's handymen gets them signed up and assigned to their duties. Thus they miss nothing, yet are ready to pitch in the moment it is all out and over.

"As for the unending quest for permanent workmen, want ads in the local dailies are augmented by signs on show wagons that occupy conspicuous spots on the lot and on the steam calliope for its noonday circuit uptown. These signs were revised a few weeks ago to read, 'Help Wanted. Going west to California'.

Capable Supervision

"The mixture of help that has to be relied upon—green with experience—calls for close supervision and here again, Cole Bros. is fortunate. Always staffed by seasoned bosses, the show also has for example ticket sellers such as Bob and Leo Parker and Ed Grady, who, well grounded in all phases of the circus, know how to get the most out of a young, but willing bunch of town recruits.

"Eugene (Arky) Scott and Bill Woodcock fit effectively into the picture by having their elephants on hand exactly when needed. Indeed, they have trained one bull, name of Blanche, to

roll and unroll canvas with her foot and trunk. On a wet night, when the canvas is water soaked the boys say she can do the work of 20 men.

Curtis Almost Legendary

"Then there's W.H. (Cap) Curtis, the general superintendent. He has been saved for the last, not because he's any the less important, but because there's more to say about him.

"Cap has been handling canvas for 56 years. He recalled on the lot at Kankakee that he first made that town in 1893 with the Harris Nickel Plate Dhoe. He's a great one to remember dates that way. It was in 1912 for instance that he put the first tractor ever used on a circus on the old Floto show. From the way Cole Bros. big yellow caterpillars were roaring around the lot, it was apparent the tractor is here to stay, much as the sentimental folk mourn the passing of draft horses. Two of the cats have booms at the rear for loading canvas. They can either load into a wagon trailing along or scamper back and forth to a wagon parked in one place, as is done when the menagerie is struck. A third and smaller tractor has a boom

at the side and in the hands of two operators, it pulls all the stakes on the lot. A bulldozer at the front not only serves as a counterweight for stakepulling but is also useful on a rough lot, such as for leveling the center ring for the Cristianis.

Cap's Spool Wagons

"The name of Curtis will forever be associated with the canvas spool wagons he had in use on American Circus Corporation shows up until 1928. That year was one of the junctures at which Cap tried to retire. His spools on Sells-Floto show were rebuilt into stringer wagons and he designed a canvas-wagon boom to do the loading. But, Cap says after John Ringling bought out the corporation, Ringling talked to him about building spools for all the shows. This project however was nullified by the depression. Cap also says that had it not been for the shortages of materials, the Cole show would have installed spools during the recent war.

"Thus it's plain to be seen Curtis still is a firm believer in the spool wagon. In fact, he holds it was years ahead of its time and that its use is bound to be revived if the circus is to survive. The same goes for the folding seat wagons he had for six years on Hagenbeck-Wallace. One of these ingenious wagons could be spotted along the sidewall and with little more than a twist of the wrist be converted into a section of 240 star back seats. He maintains the same principle could be applied to a chair section, making for a decided saving in time and labor as well as greater safety. Safety in seats has always been a Curtis objective, and for the record it should be mentioned here that he is responsible for the safety chains widely used on seat jacks.

Plans Guying-Out Machine

"Cap now has in mind still another mechanical device he hopes to develop if, as he has been saying for years, 'I stay in the business'. It's a guying out machine. Not only will it do the work of a whole crew of men, but it will do it better by doing it uniformly. Guying out a top by hand is done by guesswork. Cap says his machine will have a gauge that will register the stress and strain as each rope is tightened.

"This all adds up to a confirmed belief on Curtis' part that, labor conditions being what they are, the shortage of circus help is here to stay and that the only way to compensate for the resultant loss of manpower is the development of more and better labor-saving methods."

Following Denver the show continued in Colorado with a stand at Pueblo and was at LaJunta the next day where the light matinee was blamed on

a polio scare. At night there was a near capacity house with mostly adults in attendance. Colorado Springs was next followed by a Sunday date in Longmont, July 28, where attendance was also light, again caused by an alarm over a polio outbreak. Fire starting in the generator room of a sleeper caused damages estimated at \$2,500 in the afternoon in Longmont and destroyed clothes of some of the occupants. The next day in Ft. Collins saw better business and at Greeley, final stand in the state, the afternoon show drew a half house with three-quarters at night. Show officials said the overall Colorado tour had ranged from fair to good.

Cole Bros., which had suffered the effects of the polio epidemic currently hitting the north central and western states at two stands in Colorado, had it far better than several shows on tour. The epidemic hit those circuses playing in Minnesota and the Dakotas worst of all and Cole only ran into the fringes of the widespread scare throughout most of the area. Dailey Bros. and Kelly-Miller in South Dakota, Bell Bros., Mills Bros. and C.R. Montgomery in Minnesota and Stevens Bros. in North Dakota all had to cancel dates and get out of the region fast in order to escape the devastating "paralysis at the ticket wagon" during these epidemics which periodically walloped circuses in those days. A few weeks later the *Billboard* announced that polio which struck in the summer of 1946 had hastened the closings of Mills Bros., Patterson Bros., and Banard Bros.

Cole moved into Wyoming at Cheyenne, July 31, and headed due west crossing the state with dates at Laramie, Rawlins, and Rock Springs, where business was termed disappointing by the management. A Sunday run, August 4, took the train 236 miles over the Union Pacific to Salt Lake City, Utah, for a stand the following Monday.

In Salt Lake City the show was forced by the city's strict municipal regulations to give the canvas a fresh treatment of flame-proofing and to fasten down its grandstand chairs. The canvas was doped on Sunday afternoon but the order for the chairs came so late that Monday's matinee was delayed an hour. Parley Baer of station KSL cooperated in arranging for a show to be given at the Veterans Administration Hospital on Sunday afternoon. In spite of terrific heat the matinee was near capacity and at night two shows had to be given to accommodate the tremendous crowds who wanted to see it. Downtown tickets for the first night show were sold out by noon. Ruth Nelson suffered a broken wrist when her high jumping horse crashed into the barrier during the final show. She was out of the performance for several weeks.

One other Utah date was played, Ogden, August 6, which gave a near capacity matinee and straw house at night.

The show then went into Idaho for eight stands with initial date coming at Pocatello which was followed by Burley, Twin Falls, and a matinee only date in Jerome on August 11. A three quarters house caught the single performance in the rather small town. Boise, the following day, produced the best of the Idaho dates with a half house at the matinee and capacity in the evening. Nampa, August 13, had a half filled tent in the afternoon and near capacity at night.



Photo No. 25—The Flying Thrillers, flying return act, on Cole Bros. lot at McCook, Neb., July 20, 1946. Photo by Joe Fleming.

The show next moved into Oregon for dates at Ontario, Baker, and LaGrande where business was fairly good. Cole then headed for Washington with initial date at Walla Walla where the matinee was two hours late as a result of the tardy arrival of the train. The show was in the state two full weeks and the stands played included two days in Spokane, two in Tacoma, and three in Seattle, the rest being one dayers. The August 31, 1946 *Billboard* told the story of the show's trek through Washington and noted that business had been O.K. The article said that hot afternoons and comfortable nights have been the rule in the state with matinee business running from light to fair and night houses usually capacity. Two days in Spokane drew light matinees but full night houses. An effective merchants' promotion helped boost a good day at Kenniwick on the Sunday before Spokane. Despite some delay in the 177 mile run to Wenatchee, August 21, plus a last minute lot change, the matinee started on time to a three-quarters house with a full one on hand in the evening. The

former lot in the south of town proved to be too small so the show moved to a site on the north end. The haul had to be made through the business district which helped build interest in the show. The following 123 mile to Everett saw the train come in late and consequently the matinee was delayed two hours in starting, but still the show drew a half house with a near capacity crowd on hand at night.

The Sept. 7, 1946 *Billboard* continued coverage of Cole's tour of Washington and said that business at the three day stand in Seattle had been satisfactory. First two days had lightly attended matinees but night shows ran from three-quarters to near capacity. It was noted that very little paper (passes) showed up in Seattle and most of those attending paid cash at the wagon. Emmett Sims of the press department said that reception from the local press along the route of late had been okay in spite of the shortage of paper pulp which had put the squeeze on the space newspapers would allocate for circus publicity. At Tacoma, Aug. 27-28, the crowds ranged from half houses at the matinees to three-quarters at night. The Tacoma lot located at the end of the 15th Street Bridge was far from ideal. Ten trees had to be cut down to make enough space for set up and there was a coating of silt over the lot which made it necessary for caterpillar tractors to get the show on and off the lot as the trucks were ineffective. Ring stock also found it difficult in getting their footing when moving on the lot. Polio which had now spread from the midwest into the area is believed to have hurt Cole's recent attendance in Washington. A final note said that the jinx of having to use a lot four miles out in Olympia, August 29, resulted in light business in that city.

Longview, August 30, was the final date in Washington, then the show headed southward to Oregon with a four day stand in Portland, the first of engagements in that state. Corvallis, Eugene, Roseburg, and Medford followed, after which the show moved over the Southern Pacific on a Sunday run of 184 miles to Redding, California. A broken draw bar during the 125 mile run from Roseburg caused a late arrival in Medford, September 7. Freddie Freeman wrote in his *Billboard* column, "First wagon hit the lot in Medford at 12 o'clock and show started at 3:05. Not bad, Mr. Cole. Of course, we have plenty of workingmen." Excellent night business was reported in both Roseburg and Medford.

A *Billboard* reporter caught up with the show and his account of Cole in Oregon made interesting reading in the Sept. 14, 1946 *Billboard*. Headlines stated that "NEW WARDROBE OUTSHINES BUSINESS FOR COLE BROS." The article went on to say that there was a near capacity matinee and full night house in Eugene, Sept. 4, but

elsewhere business for the past week was nothing startling. Both performances were played before light houses at the final Washington stand in Longview where Cole Bros. was just two days behind a Shrine sponsored date played by Polack Bros. No. 1 unit. The four days in Portland were described as poor with little to explain the slump other than apparent public apathy. Crowds on Labor Day, Sept. 2, did not equal those on the Sunday before which was the best day of the run. Weather, though cloudy the first and last days, was deemed no deterrent. Some opposition was furnished by a double header Pacific Coast League baseball game. At Corvallis, Ore. there was a half house at the matinee and three-quarters at night. The reporter noted that the show had been blessed lately with early arrivals and all performances have been on time. New wardrobe, ordered last spring from the DeMoulin Co. was used for the first time in Portland and it adds flash and color to Col. Harry Thomas' current spec, Caravan to Mecca, although an inventory suggests considerable geographic and historic license was exercised in the selection of wardrobe. The procession is led by a mounted section in red, white, and blue costumes of Turkish design. Next comes a section in authentic garb of the Canadian Northwest Mounted. Another is in parade dress of Imperial Russian Cossacks. The men and women's walking sections in the spec also have effective new costuming.

The initial stand in California at Redding was one to remember as the show suffered its second railroad wreck in as many years. It was not as serious as the 1945 wreck at Little Falls, Minn., but potentially it could have been much worse than it was. The accident occurred in the yards in Redding and at the time the train was moving very slowly, but still fast enough for two cars, a flat loaded with cages and the elephant car to turn over when their wheels jumped the track. Fortunately there were no fatalities although two employees were injured and in spite of being shaken and frightened no animals were seriously hurt. The Sept. 21, 1946 *Billboard* told the story.

"13 Cole Bros. Elephants Escape Injury as 2 Cars are Derailed in California. Cage animals Also Unhurt, but two Men are in Hospital.

"While five cars were being switched to a Southern Pacific siding in Redding, Calif. for unloading, Sunday, September 6—a split switch derailed the elephant car and a flat car containing 6 cages and turned them over on their side. 13 elephants and 1 horse in the stock car and all the animals in the cages escaped injuries beyond bruises, minor cuts. Two workmen were hospitalized, one with a broken leg, one with a broken foot. Nearly two

hours were required to cut an opening in the steel top of the elephant car to release the animals. While an acetylene torch sprayed sparks, a stream of water was played over the bulls. Blanch, lead elephant, was the first one out and no trouble was experienced with any of the herd. The show had made a 185 mile Sunday run from Medford, Oregon and it was a little before 7 P.M. when the mishap occurred. No time was lost since performances were not scheduled until Monday, Sept. 9. It was announced that a flat car and baggage car of the railroad would be used until the show's damaged cars were repaired. A crowd of 2,000 swarmed to the scene of the wreck Sunday night and almost half of Monday's *Record-Searchlight* was taken up by the story and four column picture of the derailment. Attendance at the matinee was disappointing but there was a capacity crowd at night.



Photo No. 24—Gee Gee Engessor and 16 horse Roman Standing Hitch entering big top at McCook, Neb., July 20, 1946. Photo by Joe Fleming.

The show moved on down through California generally following a route it had played in 1940, 42, 43, and 44. The train arrived on time in Chico, Sept. 10, and played to a nice matinee crowd and full night house. At Sacramento the next day there were again rail difficulties as the train was parked in the downtown area for some time blocking auto and streetcar traffic and generally causing a real mess, until it could be properly spotted. As a result of the delay in unloading and consequent traffic jam, the matinee was an hour late in starting. It attracted less than a half house but there was a sellout at night. Stockton, September 12, also gave a big night house. The show did not play San Francisco, but was in Oakland for three days, Sept. 13-15. The train did not reach Oakland until 8 A.M. and set-up was further delayed by a shortage of local labor. All departments found it difficult to find anyone wanting to work. Schools had started three days earlier so there weren't many kids hanging around the lot to be put to work. The opening matinee was one and a half hours late and was lightly attended. The next two matinees did alright and the biggest of the evening crowds was on Saturday night, Sept. 14. The show was set upon on a dusty lot located in the factory and cannery district several blocks from the nearest street car line and this was

blamed for the below par take in Oakland.

Moving out of Oakland, the show played San Jose, San Mateo, Redwood City, Palo Alto, Santa Cruz, and Salinas during the next week and found rather light matinees with night houses ranging from three-quarters upward. Continuing ever southward, the show picked up a number of coastal towns as it headed toward Los Angeles. It played San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Oxnard, Santa Paula and North Hollywood, all of these towns producing fair to light matinees and fair to good night crowds. So far California business wasn't exactly booming for Cole, considerably off from previous tours in recent years. North Hollywood, Sept. 28, was handicapped by a late arrival from Santa Paula due to difficulty in obtaining a powerful enough freight locomotive to haul the show train over the moun-

tains. First wagon reached the lot about a mile from the runs at 9 A.M. Labor shortage also contributed to a slow set-up and the matinee didn't get underway until 3:30 P.M. with a light crowd, about 1,000, attending. The evening show drew a goodly number.

After strong radio, promotion, movie pitch, and generally heavy advance work the show began its ten day run in Los Angeles September 27. Norman Carroll handled the advance radio and movie promotion on special assignment for the show. Ora Parks, Cole press chief, was also on hand before and during the engagement. Special attention was turned to bringing movie names to the lot and the pre-opening publicity for all phases of the ballyhoo was outstanding. It was scheduled for many of the show's performers to appear on network radio shows during the time Cole was in Los Angeles. This was during the final years of big time radio network programming. In another 3 or 4 years it'd all be TV.

Dates of Cole's Los Angeles run were Sept. 27-Oct. 6 and the *Billboard* kept the show world fully informed about it. The Oct. 12, 1946 *Billboard* said the 10 day stand was a sure winner with night crowds holding up after a strong opening weekend. It was opined the advance build-up had paid off. The article went on to say that the show had experienced its biggest opening day business in Los Angeles ever with full houses at both matinee and evening performances Saturday, Sept. 28, saw the seats packed in the afternoon with

a turnaway at night. Business held up for the first Sunday performances, even though the thermometer registered 98 for the hottest day of the year. The matinee was a turnaway and the night house packed. From Monday through Wednesday, of the first week, the matinees ranged from one half to three-quarters but every night the top was full. Norman Carroll had done his job well. The radio publicity was a tremendous success and many movie personalities were on the lot. During the engagement clown alley was augmented and Marilyn Rich, aerialist, was added to the program for the California dates. A *Billboard* reporter noted that otherwise the staff and program was unchanged. Lucio Cristiani was out of his act because of a serious knee injury at Oxnard, Calif., when he fell to the ring curb.

The Oct. 5, 1946 *Billboard* continued the coverage of the Los Angeles stand saying Cole had been doing consistently good business in the city after a spotty journey on the West Coast in recent weeks. The show, set up on the Washington and Hill streets lot, continued to draw as the stand was dwindling to a close. Rumors had been strong for some time that the show planned to make a Mexican tour in October but Terrell told reporters that he didn't think Cole Bros. would cross the border. Other officials cited difficulties in obtaining visas, inspections, inoculations, and other red tape necessary to make the trip. Another reason given is that the show would have to venture deep into Mexico to find profitable territory as the spots rather close to the border wouldn't produce the desired take. However, despite Terrell's statement, rumors continued to fly concerning the Mexican trip for several days thereafter. Final summation of the Los Angeles stand indicated the show had a total of four turnaways and generally fair matinees and strong night houses. All departments did good except the aftershow which never does well in this territory. Sideshow and concessions did better than expected. Fine weather prevailed during the run and first class cooperation of the local press and radio made the spot a winner.

Resuming the tour, the show moved to Long Beach for two days, Oct. 7-8, which resulted in satisfactory business but the take was not up to 1944. Both matinees were light but nights found the big top nearly full. The show broke in a new lot which may have hurt attendance. There was a good day in Santa Ana, Oct. 9. Following stands at Pasadena and Pomona gave excellent night business and the final day in California, San Bernardino, Oct. 12, saw a turnaway at night.

As the show departed on a 350 mile Sunday run to Phoenix over the

Southern Pacific rumors still continued that the show would play a 15 day stand in Mexico City following its Corpus Christi, Texas, date in early November. Still another major rumor came up, this one was that the show was about to be sold but it was positively denied by Cole officials.

Although the long run to Phoenix wasn't the best time for relaxation at least it was the first off day for the Cole people in more than two months. Both nights in Phoenix saw the crowd strawed to the ring curbs with hundreds turned away. Also the matinees did very well. The next day in Tucson produced a big matinee crowd, and after Douglas, October 17, the show moved into Texas with two days in El Paso. Freddie Freeman wrote in his column that the 217 mile overnight run from Douglas put the show into El Paso at 7 A.M. and everything was in readiness for the matinee by 1 P.M. The two days in El Paso paid off nicely despite formidable opposition both evenings from local football games. Next came three dates in New Mexico, Carlsbad, Roswell, and Clovis. At Carlsbad the state schools were dismissed early and children admitted at a special price. A great matinee crowd



Photo No. 21—Cole Bros. elephant herd on the lot at McCook, Neb., July 20, 1946. Photo by Joe Fleming.

was on hand in warm and clear weather.

A two and a half week tour of Texas began at Amarillo, October 24, where weather was ideal and the show had a good matinee crowd and turnaway business at night. While in the city Cole officials announced that the Mexico trip was definitely off. Next came Abilene and at San Angelo the train didn't arrive until 10 A.M. and the first wagon reached the lot at 11:30. However, with Noyelles Burkhart in overall charge of all working crews the show got set up in spite of windy weather and the matinee went on as scheduled with very little delay. At night the weather was calm and clear. Brownwood had three quarters houses for both performances and Temple produced a good matinee crowd but night business was off. After Lubbock the show played Sweetwater, October 26, where following a fair matinee there was a capacity crowd in the evening.

Austin, Nov. 1, was one of the biggest days of the season. There was a near

capacity matinee in spite of showers and at night the crowd was strawed to the ring curbs even though the weather was threatening. Two good days in San Antonio (Nov. 2-3) followed, the stand being played shortly after Polack Bros. finished a week long date in the city for the Shrine. Saturday evening in San Antonio was very large, so was the Sunday matinee, even though it was preceded by showers. Moving on to Corpus Christi for two days (Nov. 4-5) the train arrived late and a muddy lot further delayed set up but the matinee did begin at 4 P.M. to a good house. At night they were on the straw and next day there was a three-quarters matinee and full night house in cold, damp weather. Victoria was a winner, but the consistently fine business the show had enjoyed since leaving California was interrupted at Bay City where performances were scheduled for November 7. Heavy rains made the lot impossible and after the first wagon mired to its bed it was decided to cancel the stand and move on to Beaumont which was billed for November 8.

A final stand in Texas had been scheduled for Nacogdoches on November 9 but for the second time in three days the show had to blow it on account of muddy grounds. The Clyde

Beatty Circus had already gone into winterquarters at the fairgrounds so that lot was not available. Cole contracted the Berger pasture lot which after a ten inch rain over the past few days was just in too bad a condition to even attempt to use. The show then moved on the 228 miles to Shreveport, La. on a Sunday run with performances scheduled for Monday, Nov. 11.

In spite of the wet weather which spoiled the final days in Texas the state had been very good to Cole, in fact it had produced some of the most consistently good business of the entire season. Playing Texas was not without opposition as two other railers, Daily Bros. and Clyde Beatty, and the motorized Sparks Circus had a crack at the natives' pocketbooks at about the same time as Cole.

The long run into Louisiana at Shreveport didn't get the show out of the wet area and rain which fell most of Sunday turned the state fairgrounds into a quagmire, however on show day, the weather was clear and crisp and despite all of the mud the show experienced a near capacity matinee and heavy straw house at night. A late arrival delayed the matinee the next day at Texarkana, Ark-Tex, where the

lot was again very muddy from recent rains. A fair crowd showed up in the afternoon but the night take was good. There was another delay in Hot Springs, Ark., Nov. 13, in arrival and set up and the matinee started an hour late but still drew a big house. Tent was three-quarters filled at night. The last stand of the 1946 season came at Little Rock, Ark., Nov. 14, and the finale drew a half house at the matinee and three-quarters in the evening.

In the archives of the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis., there is an interesting document, a train movement order of the Missouri Pacific Railroad Co. which covers the final three days of the season. It is reproduced here (in part) as follows.

**MISSOURI PACIFIC
RAILROAD COMPANY**

Freight Tariff

of

Local and Joint Rates

No. C-408

on

Cole Bros. Circus

Consisting of Thirty (30) Cars, viz-
Fifteen (15) Flat Cars, Five (5) Stock
Cars, Nine (9) Coaches and One (1)
Advertising Car
(See Item No. 6)

Rates in Dollars and Cents Per Run

From Texarkana, Ark., November
12, 1946 (about midnight), to Hot
Springs, Ark., \$871.00. (See Item No. 7.)

From Hot Springs, Ark., November
13, 1946, to Little Rock, Ark., \$496.00.

From Little Rock, Ark., November
14, 1946, to Memphis, Tenn., \$597.62.
(See Item No. 8.)

Issued October 29, 1946, effective
November 12, 1946

(Expires with December 15, 1946,
unless sooner cancelled, charged, or
extended.)

Issued under authority of Rule 63 of
Interstate Commerce Commission
Tariff Circular No. 20; also issued under
authority of Arkansas Corporation
Commission General Order No. 350 of
September 19, 1923.

Issued by

T.B. Duggan

Freight Traffic Manager

Missouri Pacific Building

13th and Olive Streets

St. Louis 3, Mo.

Item No. 1—The amounts shown in
Rate Column are to be collected by the
Agent before the show leaves this station.
(See Items Nos. 4-5.)

Item No. 2—The transportation of
Cole Bros. Circus is performed under
Special Contracts Nos. 17 and 18
entered into between Cole Bros. Circus
and Roy A. Thompson, Trustee, Mis-
souri Pacific Railroad Co., Debtor, and
the Union Railway Company
(Memphis, Tenn.) October 22, 1946.

Item No. 3—Full passenger fare to be
paid for all persons in excess of Four
Hundred (400) bona fide employees of

the show proper and Twenty-Two (22)
men with the advertising car.

Item No. 4—In addition to the
charges provided herein, Cole Bros.
Circus agrees to pay the Missouri
Pacific Railroad Company and the Un-
ion Railway Company (Memphis,
Tenn.) Fifty-Five (55) cents per car per
day for track rental after first Seven (7)
days upon arrival on all cars stored on
the rails of the Missouri Pacific
Railroad Company or the Union
Railway Company (Memphis, Tenn.).

Item No. 5—In addition to the
charges provided herein, Cole Bros.
Circus agrees to pay the cost of in-
stallation and removal of crossing
planks at all exhibition points where it
is necessary to install planks to take
care of loading and unloading.



**Photo No. 23—Paul Nelson on Cole
Bros. lot at McCook, Neb., July 20, 1946.
Photo by Joe Fleming.**

Item No. 6—Cole Bros. Circus has the
privilege of having its advertising car
and contents, property and employees
therein, transported in advance of the
cars containing the show proper, and
upon due notice to the officers and
agents of the Missouri Pacific
Railroad Company or the Union
Railway Company (Memphis, Tenn.),
said advertising car to be attached to
the regular trains of the Missouri
Pacific Railroad Company, and the
Union Railway Company (Memphis,
Tenn.) or otherwise as may be deter-
mined by their officers and agents.

Item No. 7—Receive empty cars from
the Texas and Pacific Railway Com-
pany at Texarkana, Ark., November
12, 1946.

Item No. 8—Deliver loaded cars to
Louisville and Nashville Railroad
Company at Memphis, Tenn. upon
arrival.

The Nov. 23, 1946 *Billboard* covered
the Cole Bros. closing and in headlines
quoted Terrell as saying the season
was O.K. The article went on to men-
tion that business had sagged in the
middle of the season after a strong
start and disruptions from strikes.
After the show closed at Little Rock it
moved 529 miles to its quarters in
Louisville. Terrell said the season as a

whole had been "highly satisfactory",
with business big at the beginning,
spotty in mid-season, good on the
home stretch. The show was out 212
days, played 154 cities in 21 states. A
heavy loss had been suffered from
strikes as the four railroad shows on
the road (Ringling-Barnum, Dailey
Bros., Clyde Beatty, and Cole Bros.)
were hard hit, but it was Cole which
took the worst belting. Thirteen days
billing was lost in rerouting made
necessary by the coal strike and four
playing dates completely lost by the
coal strike and two by the railroad
strike.

After the show returned to Louisville
very little news came from the
quarters for the remainder of the year.
The Dec. 21, 1946 *Billboard* did report

that the show's stock and the
Cristianis were all set for the Chicago
Coliseum indoor date of the Inter-
national Circus opening on Christmas
Day for a 12 day run. Stock would
include 10 elephants, 3 liberty acts, and
a number of specialty horses and
ponies. Three rail cars (presumably
system as usual) would be used for
transportation with Arky Scott in
charge of elephants and the ring stock
in charge of Paul Nelson, assisted by
John Smith and Mahlon Campbell. The
cars would leave Louisville, December
23. Harry Thomas would serve as
equestrian director and Frank Cer-
vone would have the band. The
Cristiani family would present its
riding and teeterboard acts. Dick
Clemens and his trained wild animals
and the Wallendas, high wire act,
would share top billing with the
Cristianis.

And so 1946, the year which was
predicted to be another 1919, the finest
circus season ever in Zack Terrell's
opinion, came to a close. Although
Cole Bros. had done extremely well
when compared with pre World War II
seasons the revenue had not been on
the scale of that produced during the
war years. It may be recalled at the
beginning of this series that Noyelles
Burkhart said that 1942 was the most
profitable season ever for the show.
Although the damage done to the show
by the coal and rail strikes had hurt,



still it was evident not only by Cole but all of the nation's touring circuses that the really big money years experienced while the war was in progress, were over. Although most of the populace still had money they had become cautious in spending it. In all probability there would be many, many seasons before a show would again experience the free spending years of the Second World War.

**COLE BROS. CIRCUS
TRAIN LOADING ORDER 1946
Decatur, Ill., April 25, 1946
Compiled by Bob Parkinson**

Flat Car No. 44—No. 100, Train light plant; No. 21, cookhouse; No. 22, cookhouse; No. 40, Menagerie; 2 wheel stake driver.

Flat Car No. 47—No. 65, Concessions; No. 101, Stringers and planks; Red ticket wagon.

Photo No. 29—Entire group of clowns on Cole Bros. lot at McCook, Neb., July 20, 1946. At extreme right are Otto Griebing and Freddie Freeman, whose boxing match was a Cole feature for many seasons. Photo by Joe Fleming.

Flat Car No. 46—No. 102, Stringers and planks; No. 30, Blacksmith; 2 section cage; No. 20, cookhouse.

Flat Car No. 45—No. 2, Mack truck; No. 88, Big top canvas; No. 87, Big top canvas; No. 90, Stake and chain; No. 82, Stake and chain.

Flat Car No. 48—No. 3, Mack truck; No. 70, Padroom; Columbia Tableau (side show equipment); No. 4, Mack truck (Note: No. 61, sideshow baggage wagon was on the show in 1946 but does not appear on the loading order. Probably it was loaded on this flat car as it was in 1947.)

Flat Car No. 36—Tractor; No. 103, Poles; Gilly wagon; Stake driver.

Flat Car No. 35—Tractor; No. 51,

Generator; No. 50, Generator; No. 53, Light department.

Flat Car No. 37—No. 64, Sideshow fighting lion cage and props; No. 104, Garage wagon (station wagon loaded inside) wagon used for first aid department on lot; Big school bus.

Flat Car No. 49—No. 1, Mack truck; Tractor loaded on carry-all; Ford truck (maintenance).

Flat Car No. 39—No. 9, one section cage; one section cage; one section cage; cage; No. 16, cage.

Flat Car No. 40—No. 17, cage; No. 10, cage; No. 14, cage; No. 19, cage.

Flat Car No. 38—No. 73, Trunks; No. 71, Commissary; No. 85, Chairs (and props); No. 52, Generator (or light department); No. 83, Seats.

Flat Car No. 42—No. 84, Chairs; No. 94, Seats; No. 72, Trunks; No. 93, Chairs; No. 92, Seats.

Flat Car No. 41—No. 86, Chairs; No. 81, Props; America steam calliope; No. 89, Seats.

Flat Car No. 43—No. 75, Props; Woman in Shoe Float; Mother Goose Float; No. 76, Elephant department; No. 74, Trunks.

Total 15 flats painted yellow, blue lettering.

One elephant car, one storage car, 3 horse cars. Total 5 stock cars painted red.

Sleepers Nos. 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57; private car "Owensboro". Total 9 passenger cars; 8 painted red, Owensboro painted green.

One advance advertising car.

Total: 30 car circus.

SEASONS GREETINGS

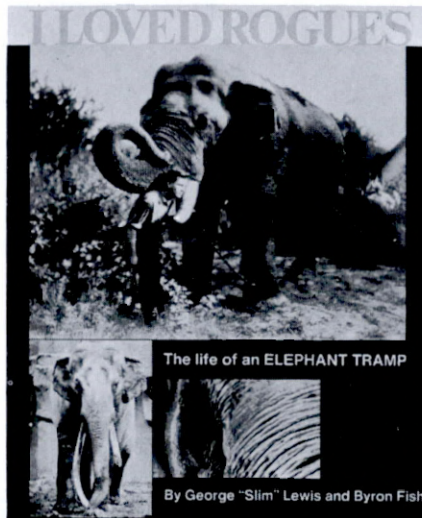


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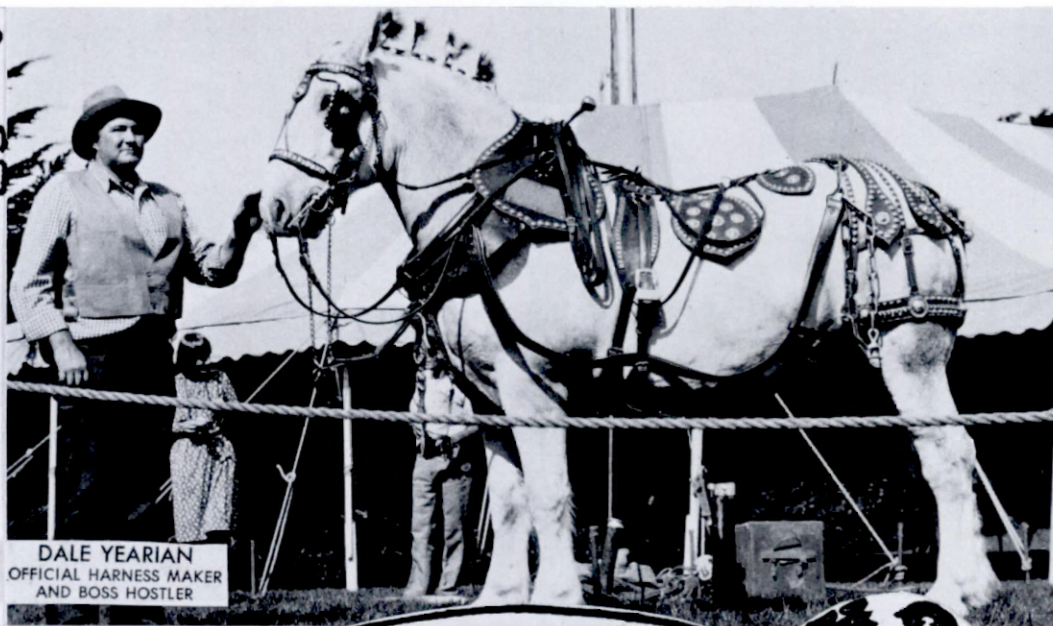
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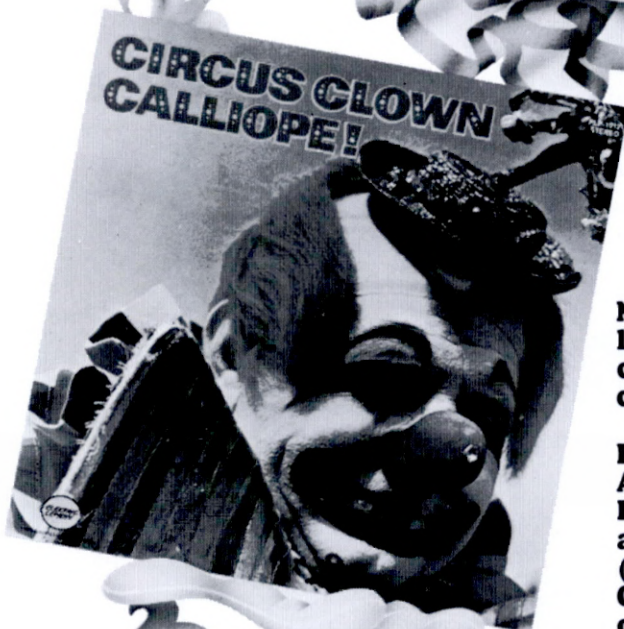
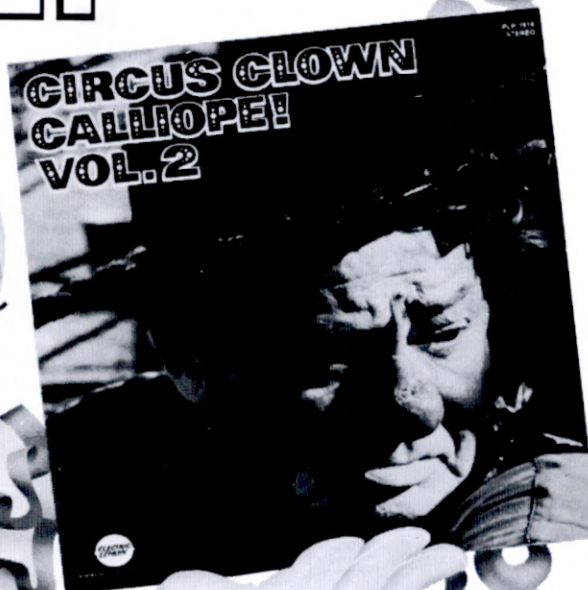
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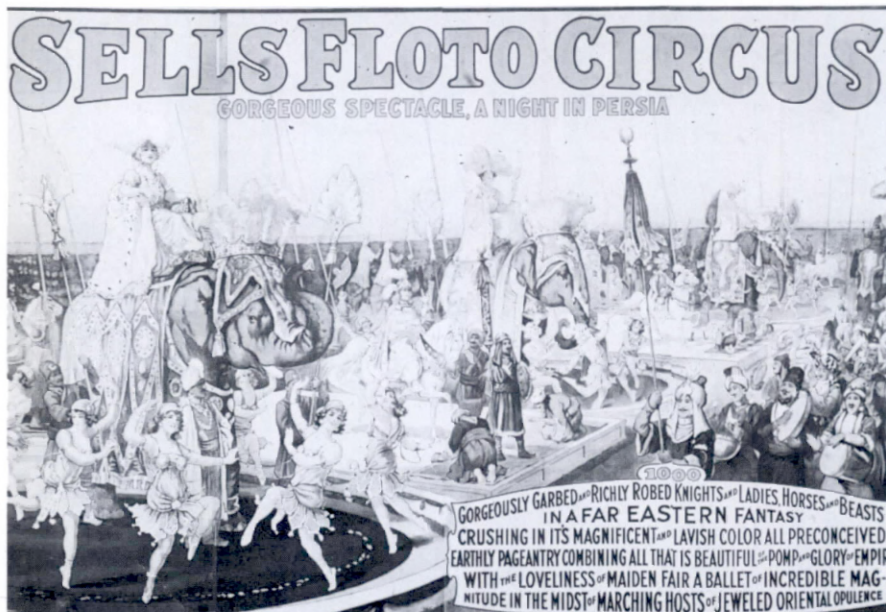
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SELLS-FLOTO CIRCUS 1923

By Chang Reynolds

The year of 1923 highlighted a turning point in the history of the Sells-Floto Circus for it was at the end of that year that steps were taken by the management to provide a new kind of program for the Golden Twenties. Since 1916, when Lucia Zora last worked the big cat act after the opening pageant, the Sells-Floto Circus had avoided the use of wild animal acts. It had presented elephant acts, but no steel arenas filled with snarling, spitting carnivores, no sleek polar bears, no wild animals of any other kind—save elephants—thrilled the audience. This, however, was to change with the end of the 1923 season.

Several years ago this author told the story of that year which featured the return of the big cats and bears (*Bandwagon*, Vol. 8, No. 2, March-April, 1964). At the time plans were made and notes collected to follow it with an article concerning the show's activities in 1923, the year leading up to the change in program. Other interests and demands took precedence and the task was delayed in favor of the 101 Ranch, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Norris & Rowe, plus much research on 19th century circus history. Now, there is an opening in which the theme can be Sells-Floto and the time, 1923.

The Sells-Floto Circus has undeservedly been branded as a "western show" by many fans and historians. That this is an incorrect label can be understood from a study of the routes of this circus from its earliest days until its final season. Granted it was based for years in Denver, Colorado,

and toured the Pacific coast and the Far Western states. However, it also went east as early as 1909 and frequently toured eastern towns and cities in the years after that season. That year 1909, it went into Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Later, it often played in Ohio and was in West Virginia on occasion. In 1919, the Sells-Floto Circus made twenty-nine dates in New England including a week-long stand at Boston. The same thing occurred in 1921 when it had twenty-four dates in the New England states and in 1922 when it made nineteen dates in that section. It played a week in Boston on

The well known Buffalo Tab is shown in the backyard of the Sells-Floto Circus in 1923.



This 16 sheet poster was done for the Floto show by Strobridge in 1923 to advertise the new spec, *A Night in Persia*.

each of these occasions. However, the 1923 season marked its big tour of New England. That year it played for nearly seven weeks in that group of states and included three dozen different cities in its tour. In fact, only six weeks of this show's 1923 tour was spent west of the Mississippi River and those were in Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana. The Sells-Floto Circus often played in Canada; it played in Mexico; and it toured all of the United States during its lengthy history. It could better be known as a continental circus, but at least it should be recognized for what it was—a United States circus.

The 1923 season began late in March when three advance cars were dispatched to Chicago to prepare for the annual opening of the circus in the Coliseum on Saturday, April 7. At the outset, there was sorrow on the show over the sudden death of Edward Charles Warner, who had been connected with this circus organization for fifteen years. Originally the general agent for the Norris & Rowe Circus he had been excursion agent, railroad contractor, and, at the time of his death, general agent and traffic manager of the Sells-Floto Circus. He was forty-eight years old. His position was taken by R.M. Harvey who was no First-of-May. Harvey had trained under Louis E. Cooke and W.E. Franklin, two great general agents at the turn of the century. He had been with the Barnum & Bailey Circus for about a decade and with the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus for close to a dozen years. In the early Twenties he had been manager of the Chicago office for Mugivan, Bowers, and Ballard—owners of the American Circus Corporation.

When the band led by Al J. Massey signaled the advent of the first units of the magnificent spectacle "*A Night in Persia*," the season was really launch-

ed. The Coliseum had three rings and two stages and the Sells-Floto performance kept them all full and all exciting during that first night of the stand. William Allison was assistant to Massey and George L. Myers produced the colorful spectacle. Fred Ledgett was the equestrian director.

The first display opened the actual performance with the three rings full of football and bucking mules. Billy Lorette, who worked the audience before the spec began, also was a part of this number.

Display 2 had five elephants in each of the three rings with Irene Ledgett working the center ring quintette. During the first years of the Sells-Floto show's existence a remarkable woman, Lucia Zora, had worked elephants and cats. After she left in 1916, her place with the pachyderms was taken by an equally remarkable lady, Irene Montgomery Ledgett. It should also be noted that fifteen elephants performing at one time was a high for this show. It had used ten in 1922 and before 1921 had not used more than seven or eight, and not all of those show-owned.

Display 3 featured the Riding Hobsons, Senorita Delores, and the Joe Hodgini Family. These were all riders and the big attraction was the equestrian comic, Joe Hodgini.

Aerial contortion, gymnastics, and athletic features were the fourth display. Among those working in these acts were the Uyeno Japanese Troupe, the Shuberts, Ken Palmer, the Ward Sisters, Inez Lupe, Belle McMahon, Zoe Fernando, the Hendryx Duo, the Tybell Sisters, the Larkins, and the Omundo Japanese Troupe—a fine group of performers who entirely filled the arena.

Display 5 gave an opportunity for the American Circus Corporation to display its collection of beautiful equines and canines. There were pony drills, canine troupes, dog and pony combinations, and just plain dog acts. James Williams, Rose Collier, Betty Miller, Joe Miller, and Fred Collier worked the acts.

It was followed by the aerial artists: Mayme Ward, flyer; six girl aerialists; the Great Shubert; another six girl aerialists; and Erma Ward, flyer. Before the sixteen-day stand in the Windy City was completed, Erma Ward had captured the town and everyone knew her name as an important performer with the circus.

The aerialists departed and pony acts worked by Betty Miller and Rose Collier were on the stages. In each end ring was a Liberty Horse act; Joe Miller in charge of one, and Ralph Duval had the other. In the center ring were Fred Collier's famous white Liberty Horses—twelve in number. The horses left a highly pleased audience, according to reports, and



The band director on Sells-Floto in 1923 was Al J. Massey, shown here with his group. Pfening collection.

Display 8 came on to feature the Waters Duo, in wire feats; the Three Lucky Sisters, who also performed on the wire; and Emilie Lupe, Wheeler and Biggs, and the Kimball Sisters Trio, all aerialists of the silver strand.

Equestrians made up Display 9. It featured some of the best-known performers in American circus history—the Don Alberto Hodgini Family, the Joe Hodgini Troupe, and the Homer Hobson Family. Hand balancers were next and probably few circus historians can list many of them from memory. The ones performing on Sells-Floto in 1923 were Bert and Bertie, Oranto Duo, Mac Tiles, the Houstons, the Larkin Two, Lupe Duo, and Bert Weston.

And then, at last, came the clowns who, except for Lorette's appearance at the beginning of the show, had not had an opportunity to overwhelm the patrons. Harry LaPearl was producing clown. Others were Lorette, Joe Lewis, Fred Briggs, Crawford Droege, Cecil Denny, Fred Delmont, Bill Caress, Bill Koplin, C.W. (Red) Sells, Floyd Short, Bobby Hamm, Leo Hendryx, Phil Keeler, Alberto Geolino, Jack Alvin, Bobby Gossans, Major Johnson, Bill Ash, Major Harris, and Mrs. LaPearl.

Display 12 was a big event divided into three sections. First, there was the living statuary; then an old English fox hunt complete with numbers of hounds, horses, and riders; and finally the hurdle races with men and women riders. This was a strong event and long remembered. After it there was the second big aerial act with the Bert Duo, Oranto Brothers, the Arleys, Jansley Duo, and Uyeno Brothers. Then came the iron-jaw act of the LeRoy Sisters, McMahon-Rowland Troupe, and the Lucky Aerial Ballet. An aerial ballet by the same artists without the iron-jaw feature was the next display, and then the clowns were on again for Display 15. They made their third appearance in Display 17 as

the Indian riders were sandwiched between the two armies of white-faced jesters. After the clowns, the Ten Flying Wards with their outstanding casting act had the attention of the audience. The hippodrome races closed the show which, as the reader has determined, was just what it was advertised—"real circus." Strong in athletes and horses, and "no mangy lions with their claws falling out or tigers that had to be fed wet foods because of no teeth."

Before continuing with the arrival of the train on the lot at Peru for the opening stand under canvas, a comment or two should be made concerning the quarters of the American Circus Corporation in that town. The Sells-Floto Circus had only recently moved from Denver to the 450-acre farm at Peru and a massive building program was being carried out. This involved barns for housing the animals, power plants, machine shops, repair shops, and dormitories and kitchens. The executive offices were located in the town, not at the farm, as also were the wardrobe departments. The executive offices were in charge of F.A. McLain, Treasurer, assisted by Robert DeLochte, purchasing agent, and Walter Raiden, the secretary. Zack Terrell, general manager, spent most of his hours at the farm during the winter season. The dining chores were taken care of by Fred Seymour with the help of Joe Kelley. John Eberle and Charles Young were in charge of the construction work. Charles Rooney was superintendent stock and his chief assistant was Frank Wingate. Chris Zeitz supervised the elephant and animal barns with fifteen men to help him. There were thirty elephants at the place during those months since both Sells-Floto and John Robinson had herds housed at the location. The electrical department was in the care of Thomas Myers while Charles Prentice had the wagon shop and Charles Luckey the wood-working shop. Jack Bigger headed the train department with three assistants and a large crew.

Orville (Curley) Stewart was in charge of the paint shop and Mrs. F.A. Gavin supervised the wardrobe. In the ring barn Frank Wingate was the boss with John Smith and Jim Williams breaking the ring stock. (For a detailed description and history of the Peru quarters see *Bandwagon*, July-August 1964, Vol. 8, No. 4.)

In the late winter months a real estate transaction was completed which transferred 502-acres of land from the Hagenbeck-Wallace Show Company to the American Circus Corporation. The property included the quarters and a small tract northeast of Peru adjoining the Wabash Railroad yards where the train sheds and car repair shops were located. The Sells-Floto and John Robinson Circuses were quartered at this site with the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus at West Baden. Part of this deal provided that the American Circus Corporation pay to the John Robinson Circus Company all sums expended by that organization for the repair and erection of buildings at the location.

After completing the highly successful Chicago stand the Sells-Floto Circus opened under tents at Peru, as indicated. On Tuesday, business continued to be very good as the big top was crowded to the ring curbs at Indianapolis. Richmond followed, with Springfield, Columbus, and Newark (all Ohio) concluding the first week.

The second week opened with a two-day date at Pittsburgh, Pa., Johnstown, Altoona (great business), Harrisburg and Reading completed the week. At Johnstown the Floto Show encountered the Johnny J. Jones Exposition which was playing a week-long engagement in the city. In addition to the welcome sight of the friends from the Jones Exposition, who took up an entire section at the afternoon performance, the management witnessed Grover McCabe fall and break three ribs. It also encountered the first Ringling-Barnum advance billing of the season. The brigade had met the Ringling-Barnum brigade at several

points along the route before the Sells-Floto Circus had completed its Chicago stand.

Week number three of the tenting season was spent in New Jersey with dates at Newark, Paterson, Jersey City, Camden, Bridgeton, and Atlantic City. In spite of the fact that it was the second week of May, the show was playing in cold weather. However, business continued to be very good. There was a turn-away at the night performance at Atlantic City, for example.

Ringling-Barnum, which had concluded its Madison Square Garden date on 28 April, the day the Sells-Floto show was playing Newark, Ohio, had finished its tour to Washington and Baltimore and was in Philadelphia during the week that the Sells-Floto Circus was playing those New Jersey stands. It had a two-day stand scheduled for Newark, New Jersey, on May 16-17. Sells-Floto was in that town on the 7th of the month.

Week number four of the 1923 season arrived, and Sells-Floto added three more stands in New Jersey. They were New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, and Elizabeth. Allentown and Wilkes-Barre in Pennsylvania were the Thursday and Friday towns, while Binghamton (with a late arrival) filled the Saturday date. It, of course, introduced the show to New York state.

From Binghamton, the Floto Show moved into Brooklyn for the week of May 21-26. The lot was near Fifth Avenue, close to Third Street. In spite of rain and cold weather, the patrons turned out and the show had a good week. The usual week in Boston followed; from May 28 through June 2. This circus was on familiar grounds here and the fans recognized it as almost a yearly event.

Another full week in New England followed the Boston stand. The circus made dates in Fall River, New Bedford, Providence, Worcester, Springfield,

and Pittsfield. All of these were in Massachusetts with the exception of the Wednesday date in Rhode Island.

The Sells-Floto Circus in 1923 presented not only an interesting and complete big top performance but also had a fine concert and two lesser attractions—a side show and a five-in-one pit show. The concert consisted of a wild west performance with the following participants: Joe Greer, in charge; Fred Collier, Art Boden, and David Nemo, all trick ropers. The trick riders were Bill Mossman, Harry Greer, Mrs. Art Boden, Juanita Lopez, Ethel Morse, and Mrs. Jim Williams. The riders of the bucking broncs were Ed Miller, Percy Moore, and Frank Orlando. "California" Cotten, Tom Martin, and Cuban Mack did the pony express and the clowning was carried out by Joe Lewis, Bill Lorette, and Bill Caress.

W.H. "Pop" McFarland's side show had these attractions: Henry Lani's troupe of eight Hawaiians; Carmelita, long-haired lady; Princess Elizabeth, albino lady; Paul Herold, giant; Smiling Alice, fat lady; Mme. Zaza, mind-reader; Princess Marguerite, midget; Captain Terrell Jacobs, lion act; Fred Palmer, juggler; Cuban Mack Company of five people; Lady Dolly, snakes; Carlos Gonzales, knife thrower; Baby Tryon, suspension act; John Carter, rock breaker; Mackino, fire act; Prof. Tryon, Punch and magic; and Neil McClarin's Minstrels.

Lew Backenstoe's attractions in his five-in-one pit show were: Olga and her reptiles; Prince Manly and wife, Punch and magic; Zarelda, with "Buddha"; Gene Evans and the unafon; and Zippo. He planned, he said, to add a chimpanzee and three Bushmen.

At Pittsfield, on June 9, Isaac Marcks visited the show and again we are indebted to him for many details. The circus arrived in two sections, according to Mr. Marcks: the first at 5:30 and the second a half-hour later. On the first section of fourteen cars were four horse cars, seven flats, and three sleepers. This accounted for twenty-seven wagons, two tractors, and one truck. The second section of fifteen cars contained three horse cars, seven flats, and five sleepers. It loaded thirty-two wagons, of which sixteen were cages; and there was one cart. The horse cars were white and red; the flat cars white; the sleepers white and orange; and wagons white and red. It should be noted at this point that new 70-ft. steel flat and stock cars had been purchased in 1922 and these formed the basis of the 1923 train of twenty-nine cars.

The show unloaded promptly and had moved the equipment to the lot by eleven o'clock. The parade went out at eleven-thirty and was in town an hour. In the parade were thirty-one wagons which included twelve of the cages,

The Elephant tab is shown on Sells-Floto with the band just after a parade in 1923. Chalmer Condon photo.



seven tableau wagons, the air calliope, and the steam calliope. There was a Wild West section in the parade and the clown contingent, plus groups of lady and gentleman riders. The camels and elephants were included in the parade as were both calliopes.

The seven tableau wagons used in the parade included as a lead vehicle the Elephant Bandwagon, built at the Denver quarters about 1905, and used by this circus from that date each year. A very large wagon, usually termed the Buffalo Tableau also carried a portion of the big top band in the parade. This wagon originated on the Buffalo Bill Wild West in the 1890s. It has been reported on the Two Bill Show, 1909-1913, but not documented. It first appeared on the Sells-Floto show in 1914 and over the years lost most of its carvings with the exception of the central figure of the bison. The missing carvings had been replaced by elaborate art work on both sides, the front and rear of the wagon.

The side show band was transported in the parade on the Running Lioness Tableau. As in the case of the Buffalo Tableau, the many fine carvings of this wagon had disappeared since it first appeared on the Great Wallace Shows in the 1890s. It arrived on the Sells-Floto Circus about 1906 and by 1923 the carving of the running lioness was on a new wagon, or an extensive reconstruction of the original. In fact, wagon historians have some doubts as to whether the figure of the lioness remained intact over the years. The clown band was almost certainly on the India or Jardiner Tableau wagon. This was originally a Pawnee Bill wagon constructed in the very early years of this century and on that show until it was sold to Mighty Haag in 1908. It remained with Haag until its disposal to the Wortham & Allen Carnival for 1915. Wheeler Bros. Circus had it in 1916. At some date after that, Mugivan and Bowers obtained it and it was used on the John Robinson Circus for its clown band in 1921 and 1922. Another tableau was probably the so-called Dancing Girls wagon. It featured a painting on the sides with a carved statue of dancing girls on either side of the art work. It was probably built by William Curtis at the Peru quarters with the female figures obtained from some older wagon, possibly from a vehicle formerly with the Great Wallace Circus. The sixth tableau was a drop frame type wagon with comic characters painted on the sides. It was most certainly constructed by Mugivan and Bowers' workmen at their quarters shortly after World War I, or during the last year of that war. It appeared on the John Robinson Circus in 1919 and 1920, and was on Sells-Floto immediately after the beginning of the third decade of this century. The seventh tableau, in

COLISEUM NOW

SELLS-FLOTO CIRCUS
AND
BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST

5 RINGS & STAGES
5 HERDS OF ELEPHANTS
2100 PEOPLE
5 DOZEN FAMOUS CLOWNS
CONTINENT MENAGERIE
HIPPODROME
WORLD'S GREATEST
WILD WEST ARENA AND AERIAL MAZE

WITH THE GORGEOUS SPECTACLE
A NIGHT IN PERSIA WITH 1200 PEOPLE

SEATS ON SALE AT COLISEUM, LYON & HEALY AND THE FAIR
PRICES 50c TO \$1.50

The 1923 season opened with the traditional stand at the Coliseum in Chicago, Ill. This newspaper ad was used during the Chicago stand.

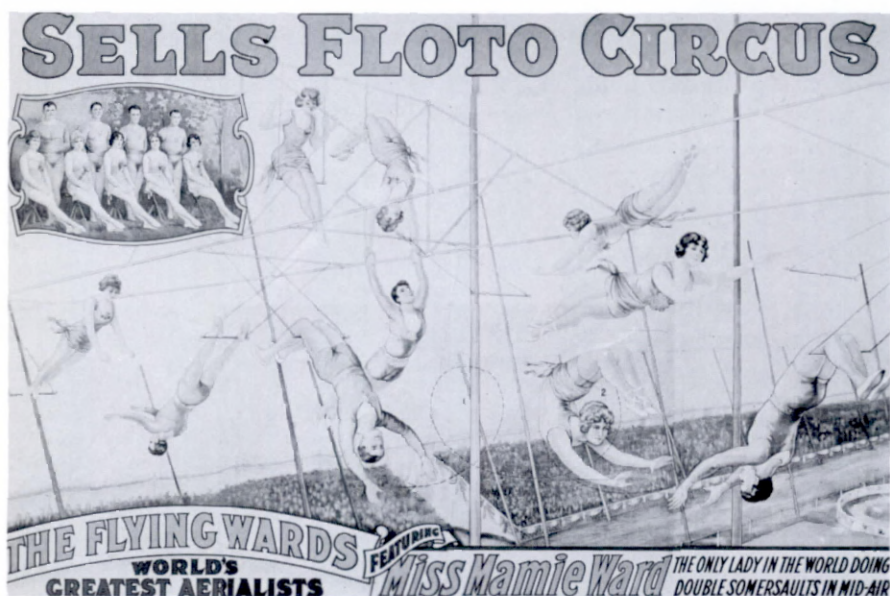
all probability, was the Gladiator and Lion Bandwagon which had been on the John Robinson Circus in 1922. While wagon historians have not placed it definitely on Sells-Floto for 1923, it certainly was on that circus in 1924 and it seems unlikely to believe that it was stored for the 1923 season. Some historians, including Bill Woodcock who saw it in the quarters that spring, do not think it went out in 1923. If it remained in Peru, there is one tableau unaccounted for in the 1923 parade.

The air calliope was a rebuilt version of an open type air calliope that had been used by the Sells-Floto Circus since the middle of World War I. The steam calliope was the well-known Two Jesters calliope that was under construction at the Denver quarters about 1920.

The dozen cages in the parade, as well as those on the lot, were the familiar Sells-Floto design vehicles for enclosing animals under transport. They had been accumulated from various sources either show-built by Curtis or from the Old John Robinson Show. These latter cages were the well-known "cottage dens" with the gable roof. The Curtis-built vehicles included two or three arches in the design while the hippopotamus cage, housing "Tambon," was a large vehicle with plenty of room for the animal

to maneuver. Within these twelve cages (in the parade) were parrots, lions, tigers, the hippo, polar bears, leopards, deer, pumas, kangaroo, and a zebra. It is not known whether the famous octagonal bird cage was used for the parade this season. It is also unrecorded how many of the animals were doubled up in a cage (with partitions), but evidently some were since Mr. Marcks mentioned the lions three times in his animal inventory. Why the show carried so many is not understandable since there were no animal acts. However, lions are willing breeders in captivity and it is a sure thing that most circuses were well provided with this cat.

The 1923 Sells-Floto Circus used a 6-pole Big Top, and a 5-pole menagerie tent. The number one side show had three poles while the number two side show required five poles. There were also a dressing, and ring stock tent; three draft horse tents for the 1ax-4baggage stock; a cookhouse; a dining tent; the butcher's tent; the black's top; a tent for the privileges; one for the wardrobe; three concession tents; and three additional small tents. This amount of canvas required some effort to raise and lower, to load and unload each day. Much of this was performed by John Eberle, Superintendent of the Canvas Dept. and Matt Schonimer and Ed Hatman, his assistants, and the forty men under their direction. J.J. Washburn was Boss Canvasman of the side show and had ten helpers. It is not known if the above personnel handled



the other canvas or whether the men using the tents were responsible. In any case, the various departments will be included here:

The Cook House was headed by the Steward, Fred Seymour with Sam Sergie, his assistant and Spider Green as Chef. There were thirty-four additional men listed in that department.

The Ring Stock were in charge of Ray Taylor who had twenty-seven helpers. The Property Department was under the very capable direction of Charles Luckey. Frank Seiger was his assistant and there were thirty-two other men listed as members of that group. The Baggage Stock were in charge of Henry Brown. James Ward was his assistant and there were thirty-two men in the department, also. These included four 8-horse drivers; eight for the 6-horse teams; five 4-horse drivers; and four handled 2-horse teams. In addition, there were two saddle horses, probably for Brown and Ward, and three extra horses.

There were additional departments serving this circus and each had familiar, capable supervisors. Leonard S. Aylesworth was the Superintendent of the Wardrobe Department. Mrs. Jack Bigger and Mrs. William Koplin were in the department; the former as Wardrobe Mistress, the latter as her assistant. There were five additional helpers.

The Candy Stands were managed by Frank Gavin. Mrs. Gavin was the cashier and Herman Roupp was Purchasing Agent. Johnnie Wall was the Boss Butcher with a dozen helpers. Jacob Besser and Ray Cronin each operated an outside stand. Chester Polke was in charge of the balloons with a half-dozen sellers. There was a hamburger stand and the ice cream department—all of these under Gavin. The ice cream operation was in charge of George Scotty McKay, who was also

The Flying Wards, featuring Mamie Ward, are shown in this 16 sheet poster, made by Strobridge and used in 1923. Harold Dunn collection.

the show's Tonsorial Department.

Sells-Floto carried three blacksmiths in 1923. They were Charley Wellbrock, Ed Lavigne, and R.E. Davis. The Harness Maker was William "Waxey" Lord. George Rayner was the carpenter and C.H. Emerson painted the banners. There were also three drivers for the trio of tractors and one driver for the Dodge truck.

The menagerie contained the elephants, camels, a pony, two llamas, parrots, monkeys, three cages of lions, leopards, deer, pumas, tigers, hippopotamus, polar bears, kangaroo, zebra, and two concession stands. The elephants were:

KAS, who came from Louis Ruhe in 1909 and was delivered in Yakima, Washington. She was about eighteen months old at the time of delivery. She was on the Sells-Floto Circus until transferred to the Al G. Barnes Circus in 1933 where she remained until under the banner of Al G. Barnes-Sells-Floto for 1937 and 1938. When that show went to Sarasota at the end of 1938, she joined the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus and was with it until she was destroyed in the menagerie fire in Cleveland in 1942.

MO, arrived with Kas at Yakima in 1909 and was about the same age. She remained on the Sells-Floto Circus until she died at the Coliseum in Chicago during the opening of the show in 1928.

MAMA MARY (or OLD MOM) was with the Hagenbeck animals at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893. She remained in this country and was sold to Harry Tammen for the Great Floto Show in 1901. She remained on the

Sells-Floto Circus for many years, probably until the end of the 1923 season. In 1924 she was sold to Floyd and Howard King's Harris Bros.' Circus but the actual date of the sale has not been discovered. Later, in the Twenties, she was owned by Art Eldridge who sold her to Dr. Pierre Bernard of Nyack, New York. She and three small elephants, which had also been with Eldridge, were added to the Ringling-Barnum performance in Madison Square Garden in 1933. She died while owned by Dr. Bernard on 9 November 1933. She was on the Gentry Bros. Circus in 1928 and 1929. Some uncertainty concerning MAMA MARY's departure from the American Circus Corporation has been caused by the presence of an elephant named MOMS. This elephant was with the Carl Hagenbeck Wild Animal Show at the St. Louis Fair in 1904. She was exhibited with a young, small elephant named MONTE which was reportedly her baby. This can be disregarded except that it does give some evidence as to MOM's age and size in 1904. She was with the Hagenbeck Wild Animal Show on tour in 1905 and 1906 and then was sold to Jerry Mugivan for 1907. He used her that year on his Howe's Great London Show or the Sanger Show; evidence is not clear. She definitely was on the Sanger Show in 1913 and later was on the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. Her last touring season with it was in 1922 and during the following winter she was sold to the King Brothers for their Rice Bros. Circus of 1923. She died on that show that year. While MOMS and MAMA MARY (OLD MOM) followed different routes they both began with Hagenbeck at a world's fair and, after leaving the Corporation within a year of each other, graduated to the King brothers' organization. It is clear why the records of the early Twenties could be confused regarding these two elephants with similar names.

MARY—There was a second MARY on the Sells-Floto Circus in 1923. She was a young elephant obtained by the show when it was still in Denver in 1918. She remained on the circus until 1928 when she was involved in several stampedes. In August, 1928, when the circus train pulled into Lewiston, Idaho, after a long, hot run from Spokane, the bulls rushed into the main streets of the town. In the course of the stampede toward a lake—the animals had traveled for a dozen hours down the winding Snake River with no water stop—a garage was smashed. The owner of the garage, who was also the Mayor of Lewiston, shot and killed MARY.

MYRTLE was one of the young elephants that had arrived on the Sells-Floto Circus a year earlier. She remained on the show until 1926 when she was involved in several stampedes

that seemed to be characteristic of this group of elephants. The last stampede of that year took place at Cranbrook, British Columbia, on 6 August. MYRTLE remained unfettered and uncaught in the mountains until 8 September when she died, or was shot, shortly after recapture.

TRILBY was one of the finest-looking elephants in this herd. She came to the Floto Show from Thompson and Dundee, animal dealers of New York City, in 1904. She remained with the Floto show through 1932 and then was transferred to the Al G. Barnes Circus. She was on that show through 1936; then the Floto-Barnes combination for two years. That took her to Sarasota at the end of 1938 and she joined the Ringling-Barnum herd and was with it through 1966 and then was sent to the New Orleans Zoo. Benedict's survey in 1935 lists her at 8 feet 5 inches; 9,000 pounds.

BIG TILLIE was imported by Wm. P. Hall and was sold by him to A.C. Wortham in 1916. Mugivan and Bowers bought her the next year and she remained with their shows for a number of years. *Billboard* reported in February, 1922, that TILLIE and VIRGINIA (her baby) had arrived in the Denver quarters from Calcutta, India. Since "Calcutta," in this case, was only as far distant as the John Robinson Circus quarters it can be certain that TILLIE began the Twenties on the Robinson show. In any event, TILLIE remained on Sells-Floto through 1932. Her whereabouts in 1933 are unknown at this time, but she could have stayed at the Peru quarters. She was not one of the Sells-Floto elephants sent to Baldwin Park, California, in January of that year. The Barnes' herd consisted of fourteen elephants with the addition of the Sells-Floto five and in the autumn when Bill Woodcock visited the quarters he recorded only fourteen. Buckles Woodcock has reported that BIG TILLIE and JEWEL were added to the Ringling-Barnum herd while the show was on the west coast in 1934. From that information, this recorder believes that the two elephants were shipped west sometime during the early months of 1934, probably with the others that worked the film, "Clive of India," but were not noted as being here since they shipped out so quickly. The others of that group, of course, remained for several months. BIG TILLIE stayed with Ringling-Barnum until 16 November 1941 when she was among the group of elephants that died of poison at Atlanta, Georgia.

VIRGINIA's story has been often told. She was wild as a hawk as a youngster and the Corporation had no prize when it bought her from Ruhe in 1921. Hall had purchased her from Ruhe earlier that year and returned her. By 1928 the Sells-Floto show had

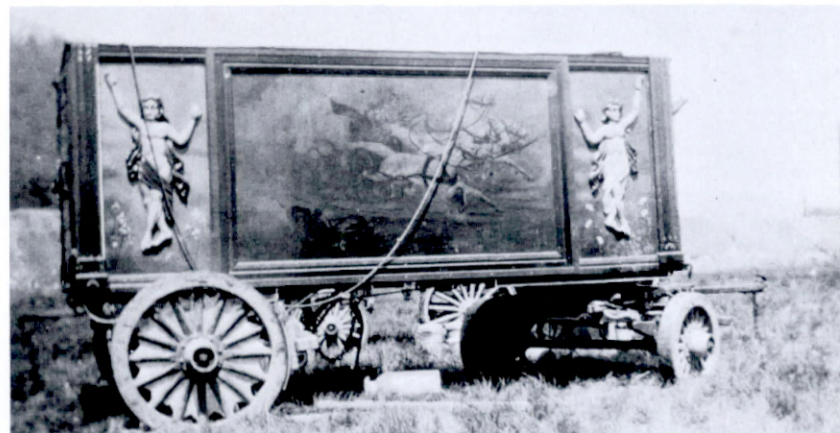


This ticket wagon, painted tableau wagon, had been on the John Robinson show prior to being on the Floto show in 1923.

seen enough of her and sent her to the Coleman show which in turn sent her back to Hall. That dealer had her on lease to many shows and finally she ended up in the hands of Spencer Huntley and Bill Woodcock. Under their experienced supervision she settled down; her name was changed to BURMA, and she was on the way to a famous career.

FRIEDA was one of the early arrivals on the Sells-Floto Circus and can definitely be placed there in 1905. She is not listed on the 1931 herd list and apparently had been sent to the Barnes' show sometime before 1930. From 1930 through 1936 she was with Barnes; then the Barnes-Sells-Floto combination; and then to Ringling-Barnum. In 1939 she was sold to Frank Buck for the World's Fair and the following year went to the zoo in

The Dancing Girls tab was used in the 1923 parade on the Floto show. This wagon was on the show for a number of seasons.



Cleveland. She died at that zoo on 17 November 1957. She was another of the big Floto elephants; standing 8 feet and weighing over 9,000 pounds on the Benedict survey.

The rest of the herd consisted of male elephants—five of them—and they must have added a bit of interest and excitement to the lives of the men who traveled in their company. (But not as much as they did a few years later.)

The oldest of these males, BILLY SUNDAY, was in this author's charge in his (the elephant's) later years at the former Selig Zoo. The writer was nightwatchman during the summer when old Bill first arrived. As a punk, BILLY SUNDAY belonged to Wm. P. Hall who disposed of him on lease to Albert Monroe Cauble in 1910. Since the elephant was very small, Cauble decided that a larger elephant would be more of an attraction. He returned Bill to Hall who dumped him on Rhoda Royal. Royal had his elephants with the Sells-Floto Circus for several years during the World War I period and Bill remained on that show until the mid-Twenties. His name is mentioned in newspaper advertising during those years. By 1928 this male was with the Sells-Sterling Circus; in 1938



he was the property of the Meitus Shows; and by 1939 was at the zoo in Los Angeles. I clearly remember unloading the show the day it arrived and placing the equipment and animals on the lot in the back acreage of the place. The work extended well into the evening since we had been delayed because of the escape of Klauder's lions. When we got BILLY SUNDAY and his companion, LUCY, on the lot several of us enjoyed mounting old Bill's head and having the thrill of looking down upon his two long, white tusks in the moonlight. A few weeks later, after he had chased Joe Metcalf all over the place and wrecked a few wagons, that thrill became a hair-razing thought. Bill was executed at the zoo in the summer of 1940—no one wanted him; or any other male elephant for that matter.

The next oldest male elephant in the herd was YOUNG SNYDER who started show business at the Hall farm in 1918. BILLY was sold to Buchanan's Yankee Robinson Circus by Hall and remained with it through 1920. At the end of the season the show equipment went to Hall's place where it was purchased by the American Circus Corporation. Thus, BILLY joined Sells-Floto and, since the famous SNYDER had recently been executed at Salina, Kansas, he became YOUNG SNYDER. He went on tour with the show through 1930. In 1931, this elephant was kept in quarters and was executed on 26 August of that year.

TOMMY, CHARLIE-ED, and PRINCE were all young males that had arrived on the show in the large group delivered in Boston. All three matured on Corporation shows and toured on various circuses of that organization until it became the property of John Ringling. TOMMY and CHARLIE-ED were primarily Floto show elephants while PRINCE toured with Gollmar in 1924 and 1925 and Heritage in 1926. After that he returned to the Sells-Floto banner. TOMMY was the oldest of the trio, with PRINCE next in age, and CHARLIE-ED the junior member, but they all were within a year or less of each other. CHARLIE-ED and TOM-

This colorful litho made for the Floto show by Strobridge was used in 1923. Harold Dunn collection.

MY each bore one tusk, while PRINCE supported a pair. All three came to the west coast for the filming of "Clive of India." CHARLIE-ED remained at the Baldwin Park quarters until 16 March 1936 when he was acquired by the San Francisco Zoo. There, having been named WALLY, he killed Ed Brown on 19 June 1936 and was executed shortly after. At the time there was much agitation to "save the elephant" but it failed. PRINCE stayed on at Baldwin Park and killed Joe Reed, a rather famous long-string driver, who was working there. Shortly thereafter he was sent to the San Diego Zoo where he died of a twisted intestine inflicted while swimming in the pool in the elephant paddock. PRINCE had good company in San Diego with Empress, Boo, and Culver—and a swimming pool. TOMMY was returned to Peru quarters by 4 August 1935 and was executed there soon after that date.

The above accounts for the fourteen elephants on tour with Sells-Floto in 1923 and that is the number seen by Mr. Marcks at Pittsfield in June. The elephant added for the Coliseum stand

The highly carved Carl Hagenbeck ticket wagon was on the Sells-Floto show in 1923. Circus World Museum collection.



to provide five in each ring has not been identified, but probably came from the John Robinson herd which was in quarters in Peru at the time.

From Pittsfield the circus made the run to Philadelphia for another stand of one week's duration. It was about one month later than the Ringling-Barnum week-long date in that city. Again successful at the gate, it went south to Washington for a two-day stand on June 18-19. Here, it had its first set-back of the season. Business was off due to the heat and the presence of too many shows in town previous to the arrival of Sells-Floto. The next date was York, Pa., and then Lancaster, Wilmington, Delaware, was the Friday town and the show played Trenton, New Jersey, on Saturday.

The tenth week of the tenting tour was scheduled to open at Newburgh, New York. Middletown, Kingston, Schenectady, and Utica followed. On Saturday, the Sells-Floto Circus returned to Massachusetts at North Adams. It encountered a severe storm with wind, lightning, and thunder in profusion at Middletown but had clear weather at Kingston and capacity business. At Schenectady, one of the show's animals was seized by the Sheriff while waiting for the circus to pay an attachment and its interest. Some papers indicated that the lawman took an elephant; others, reporting the elephants all too large, indicated that a horse was taken. It all stemmed from a hospital bill incurred for a circus employee injured when the Sells-Floto show visited the city in 1920. The doctor, who treated the man (injured while working on the flats in the railroad yards) threatened to attach the circus the day of the injury; his bill was settled before the show left town that night. The Doc moved fast; the hospital was too slow and didn't catch up with the show for three years.

In these days of June the Sells-Floto show began to cross the trail of the Al G. Barnes Circus which had passed through central New York State the second week of May. Advance cars of Sells-Floto and Al G. Barnes had met at Auburn, N.Y. where the Barnes'

crew were advertising the stand of their show on July 10. Sells-Floto advertising read, "WAIT FOR THE BIG SHOW, NOW THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH." There is no record of Ringling-Barnum lodging a suit over that statement. Barnes played Utica on the 12th and Sells-Floto was there on the 29th. Ringling-Barnum was due in that city on the 6th of July. The Walter L. Main Circus, Downie's show, was just to the west in the central part of the state at this time and the John Robinson Circus was in the extreme western region of the same state on its way to Canada. (Thoughts of being there with all of those shows so close together, makes a Fan of '76 go out of his mind.)

To return to Sells-Floto, and its eleventh week under tents—it was to be in New England for almost five more full weeks. It played Holyoke on 2 July and then followed it with Greenfield and Fitchburg in Massachusetts. Then into New Hampshire to make stands at Nashua, Manchester, and Rochester.

Six dates in Massachusetts came next—Haverhill, Salem, Lawrence, Lynn, Lowell, and Framingham. At North Adams the circus arrived late due to the wreck of an east-bound freight on the Boston & Main Railroad. Despite the late arrival the show played to capacity houses. It remained in town on that night (Saturday) because the lot in Holyoke (the Monday stand) was next door to a church and the show's management did not want to disturb the services by arriving in the middle of the morning. They also did not want to risk offending the citizens. There was wonderful business in Lynn following the short run of twenty-five miles from Lawrence. At Lowell, Erma Ward fell during her act but was saved from injury by Herbert Fleming and Eddie Ward.

The thirteenth week began with the Sells-Floto Circus at Brockton and Taunton. Business was good at both



Another rather unusual poster by Strobbridge is this animal bill used in 1923. Harold Dunn collection.

stands. The next three days were spent at Newport, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket—all in Rhode Island. A stand at Webster, Massachusetts, completed the week. Meanwhile, the Ringling-Barnum Circus, the largest competitor for Sells-Floto, had completed their Boston engagement on 23 June. It then made a few stands in that state and went into Connecticut on its way west. Sells-Floto was touring the area approximately one month later than the Big One.

July 23 was scheduled for New London with a solid week of Connecticut

The Waters, Wards, Luckeys, wire acts are shown in the backyard of Sells-Floto Circus in 1923. On the far right is Freddy Briggs, well known clown and female impersonator.



dates following. New Haven, Bridgeport, Stamford, Danbury, and Waterbury came in that order during the week. Big business was met at each stand and the earlier tour of the Ringling-Barnum show apparently had not cooled off the eagerness of the patrons to any extent. To conclude July, Sells-Floto played Meridan and New Britain in Connecticut and went into Hartford on 1 August. There, the show used the old Eastern League Baseball Park and had large crowds at both performances. Westfield, Mass., was the Thursday town, and on Friday the show unloaded at Albany, New York. It was the third circus to play Albany in 1923. The street parade was canceled at this stand due to the death of President Harding. The Max Theilon Company of six people (springboard acrobats) joined at Albany. This group had arrived in New York City a week earlier. On Saturday the show went on to Troy. On Monday, 6 August, the Sells-Floto show had a huge crowd on the Wait lot at Auburn, N.Y. It jumped across the state to Lockport for the Tuesday date, and entered Pennsylvania for a stand at Erie on Wednesday. The long run from Auburn caused a late arrival at Lockport, but the parade went out, and both performances went on at approximately the scheduled time. Thursday's town was Sandusky, Ohio, and at Kenton on Friday the afternoon show was eliminated due to memorial services held for the ex-President. Show personnel, including the band, joined with the residents of the town in these services. The night show was given as usual. Saturday's date was at Bellefontaine, Ohio. Sandusky gave wonderful business in spite of the long run from Erie.

The seventeenth week under canvas



This air calliope had come from Denver with the Floto show and appeared in the 1923 parade. Clayton Hawkes photo.

opened at Terre Haute. At this town there was a haul of over a mile to the lot but everything was up and ready to go by mid-afternoon on Sunday. On Monday the parade went out and was viewed by throngs packing the streets. Great crowds attended both performances. At Vincennes on Tuesday, the Sells-Floto Circus followed the Al G. Barnes Circus into town within five days. Both shows drew packed houses in this town. Harrisburg and Mt. Carmel, Illinois, came next and then the show played Evansville, Indiana, on Friday. On Saturday, it moved to Owensboro, Kentucky. At this stand it was still just a week behind the Barnes' show. At Louisville on Monday, 20 August, the afternoon show was jammed, the night show was a turn-away, and a second night show was filled. Sells-Floto was the third circus into Louisville in 1923 with the John Robinson Circus scheduled for a week at the State Fair held in that city in September. On Tuesday the Sells-Floto show moved to Bedford, Indiana, where it was caught in an impossible downpour. The afternoon performance was given in spite of difficulties but the night event was eliminated. The mud was so deep that the organization had a late arrival at Linton, Indiana, the next day. However, business at Linton was good considering the delay. Mattoon, Decatur, and Springfield, all Illinois, concluded the week.

The next week opened in a heavy rain at Joliet. Business was good in spite of water and mud. The weather and the crowds improved at Pontiac, Streator, Kewanee, Aurora, and Elgin during the rest of the week. These were all Illinois stands. Three additional stands in that state marked the opening of the next week. They were Freeport, DeKalb, and Dixon. At Elgin, rain practically ruined the attendance at the night performance, but the afternoon show was well attended due to the usual custom of closing all factories

and places of business at noon on Saturday. All other stands had good business. On Thursday, the show went into Iowa for three dates—Clinton, Muscatine, and Burlington.

Burlington was played on 8 September and it was also announced on that date that the show had been named as defendant in two damage suits filed in Superior Court in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The first suit was brought by a lady from Stamford who claimed that while she was sitting on an embankment beside a street in that town on 26 July, she was run over by an automobile belonging to the circus. The accident resulted in the fracture of both legs. She asked for \$10,000 damages. Her husband asked, in the second suit, for \$17,000 to cover the loss of services of his wife. Property of the circus amounting to \$17,000 was attached to cover the suits.

On 10 September the Sells-Floto show played Quincy, Illinois. Then it went to Missouri for stands at Hannibal, Brookfield, Chillicothe, Moberly, and Columbia. When it reached the Saturday town (Columbia) it had traveled some 7,250 miles in 1923. Also, at Columbia, the show paid the highest city license ever paid in that town. The cost was five dollars per car for the first twenty cars, and one dollar per car for all over twenty. The fee was \$110. The highest previous license fee was in 1900 when a show paid \$100. In Moberly, the circus wagons tore up the bricks on Carpenter and Fourth Streets. That cost the show \$200 to repair.

The twenty-second week was spent entirely in Illinois. Jacksonville, Centralia, Mt. Vernon, Belleville, Carbondale, and Cairo—Monday through Saturday in that order. Week number twenty-three was scheduled for Arkansas. It included stands at Paragould, Batesville, Newport, Little Rock, Hope and Texarkana. Difficulties had been encountered in scheduling the Little Rock date because of an ordinance prohibiting circuses from exhibiting within the city limits within a period of three weeks prior, and ten days after the



This bird cage had come from the old John Robinson show and is believed to have been on the Floto show in 1923. The photo was taken on the Floto show.

Arkansas State Fair. The rule was waived for both Sells-Floto and Ringling-Barnum since, as the mayor pointed out, they could exhibit in North Little Rock and not violate the law. Special permission was granted to both circuses. At Hope, the Sells-Floto Circus encountered rain and a soft lot. After changing lots, the night performance was given, but the afternoon show was cancelled due to the soft lot and the change in locations.

After playing Shreveport, Louisiana, on 1 October, the Sells-Floto Show began a long string of Texas dates that would take them until the 27th of the month to complete. The Texas series commenced with Marshall, on Tuesday, 2 October. Tyler, Corsicana, Mexia, and Waco completed the week. The show's constant antagonist, the Ringling-Barnum Circus, was on the way east from its Pacific Coast tour and was scheduled into Corsicana and Waco less than a week later. Needless to say, there was WAIT paper in profusion. About this time a certain Harry G. Wilson purchased "Emperor Jiggs", the big chimpanzee from L.B. Backenstoe and took him to New York and then to San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The second week in October took the Sells-Floto show to dates at Taylor, Austin, San Antonio, Gonzales, Cuero, and Victoria. The Ringling-Barnum show played Austin on the 12th and Sells-Floto was there on the 9th of October. On Monday morning, while the Ringling-Barnum Circus was unloading at the Southern Pacific Station in Houston, the Sells-Floto Circus passed through town in the Grand Trunk yards, heading for its date at Lufkin. That is as close as the two shows approached each other in Texas. Sells-Floto moved on to play Nacagdoches, Palestine, Jacksonville, McKinney and Sherman that week. The Big One continued east into Louisiana and Arkansas.

During the next to the last week of the season Sells-Floto made its dates in Bonham, Paris, Greenville, Ennis, Terrell, and Longview. That concluded the Texas tour and it followed John Ringling's show east with dates at Alexandria, Monroe (both Louisiana), and Eldorado, Camden, Pine Bluff and Jonesboro, all in Arkansas. The tour for the 1923 season ended at Cape Girardeau, Missouri, the following Monday, 5 November.

Total miles for the season were 10,707. There were thirty weeks with 186 show days in 1923 for the Sells-Floto Circus. The weather had been good and the railroads moved the show on time for the most part. Therefore, very few performances were cancelled.

In November, 1923, the circus world was informed that Jerry Mugivan was launched on something new and that, in all probability, the Sells-Floto Circus would appear in a new format in 1924. He purchased animals from the Smith's Greater Shows, the Bernardi Greater Shows, and other sources. These purchases were all trained wild animal acts. With the acts came a number of trainers new to Peru. The arrival of a consignment of sixteen polar bears, eight dromedaries, four leopards, two kangaroos, and two giant baboons at Hoboken, New Jersey, designed for the American Circus Corporation only added to the rumors. Furthermore, a shipment arriving in Baltimore included four female lions, one male lion, five pumas, and two leopards. Some speculated that Peter Taylor, who had worked an act with eighteen lions on the John Robinson Circus in 1923, would now present the largest trained lion act ever seen. Taylor also worked a puma group on that show. Clyde Beatty had an act of polar bears; Harriette Guilfoyle worked two lions riding a horse, and LaVerne Houser presented the leopards.

The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus was loaded with animal acts in 1923. There were bears riding horses and a tiger riding an elephant. Robert McPherson had the tiger act and John Helliott worked the tiger-elephant combination mentioned above and also lions riding horses. He also presented the big lion act. There was also a seal act, a pig act, another bear act, kangaroos, and, of course, the elephant act.

For those new readers of *Bandwagon* who may not have available the issues with the articles on the Sells-Floto Circus (1924), the John Robinson Circus (1923) and the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus (1923 and 1924), which this author prepared, I will digest a statement from the Sells-Floto article. At Peru, during the winter of 1923-24, were the Robinson trainers Ernest Schuman, Peter Taylor, Charles Guilfoyle, Clyde Beatty, Robert Thornton, W.W. Weaver, Cheerful Gardner,



This unusual clown bill was made by Strobbridge and used by the Sells-Floto Circus during the 1923 season. Harold Dunn collection.

Bernie Griggs, and Fred Nelson. Also at Peru were the Sells-Floto trainers (most of them newcomers). They were Aage Christensen, Jules Jacot, Allen King, Joe Miller, Red Collier, John Smith, R.M. LeDantes, Grover McCabe, Frank R. Kelso, George Allen, and Louis Reed.

At West Baden were the Hagenbeck-Wallace trainers—John Helliott, Robert McPherson and Bert Nelson. The first two worked an unbelievable number of acts in the Hagenbeck-Wallace program that season. One, or both, worked in half of the first thirteen displays and then had the rest of the afternoon off to rest up for the night performance and tear-down. In other words, there were many animal acts but few trainers compared to the staffing of the other two big Corporation shows.

Billboard, 11 August 1923, carries an excellent description of the progress being made at the Peru quarters. It will not be repeated here since one whole issue of *Bandwagon* was devoted to these quarters. However, the article did contain some items pertinent to this article. In the animal building in August were several new animals that had just arrived from coastal ports. They were in charge of Emory Stiles. The inventory included two lions, three pumas, two leopards and their two cubs, two tigers, five camels, five bears, six kangaroos, one zebra, and a zebu, and several deer. Also at quarters were three elephants in charge of Joe Metcalf. These elephants were probably not new imports, but bulls remaining from some of the Corporation shows that were on the road in 1920-22. In addition, this article

mentions some fifty head of stock on the farm near Peru (draft horses, mules and ponies), and some seventy-five wagons.

Gratitude is expressed to Joe Bradbury for information for this article; to the Isaac Marcks collection of notes on circuses in Pittsfield; and to the Circus World Museum for its fine library in which much of the research was accomplished. The *Billboard* files in that library were consulted and there is a fine list of the staff and performers for 1923 in the files.

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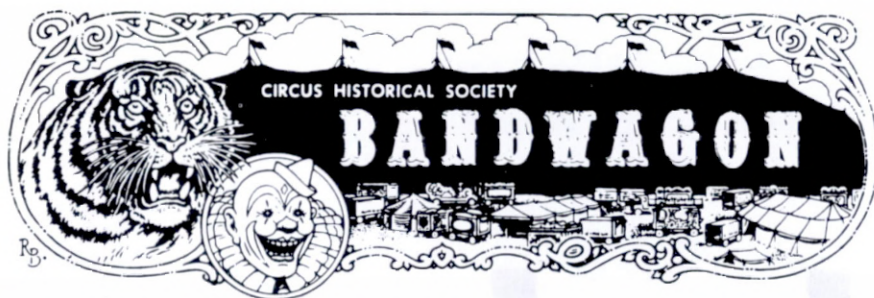
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THIS MONTH'S COVER

The unusual photograph on our cover this issue was taken around the turn of the century. The location is the winter quarters of the Barnum & Bailey Circus in Bridgeport, Conn.

The eastern seaboard receives much snow during the winter but the snow did not deter the activities of The Greatest Show on Earth as it prepared for its annual tour. The photo is from the Don F. Smith collection.

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